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ALABAMA

Rural Communities

A STUDY OF CHILTON COUNTY

PUBLISHED IN COOPERATION WITH
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



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ALABAMA COLLEGE
The State College for Women

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Alabama Rural Communities

A STUDY OF CHILTON COUNTY

by

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Mrs. Marjorie Bagwell, of Montevallo, directed the tabulation and map work and prepared the manuscript for publication.

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Marjorie Plank, of Gadsden, did the pen and ink sketches. Scott's Studio, of Clanton, took the photographs.

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To acknowledge the help given by residents of Chilton County would be to call the roll of its distinguished citizens from all walks of life and from every section of the county. No better co-operation could have been desired.



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FOREWORD

Leadership does not exist in a vacuum; it must be related to people and to the communities in which they live. The effectiveness of such leadership depends to a great degree upon the proper analysis and understanding of the local community. Since Alabama College regards as one of its important tasks, the preparation of young women for service of value to Alabama communities, it seems wise to add to our existing knowledge of these communities. That is the purpose of this study. Along with the facts which have been gathered about the social organization of Chilton County, the members of the Sociology Department of the College have also sought to develop a method by which the business man, the newspaper editor, the teacher, or any other wide-awake citizen can get a clearer picture of what an Alabama community really is. This bulletin presents that method.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture is interested in the community life of the nation. It seems appropriate for Alabama College to cooperate with it in a project of mutual benefit. This project has been directed locally, in close collaboration with government sociologists.

Sociology is one of the youngest social sciences. Already its contribution has been considerable. Perhaps one of the greatest services it has rendered to our people as a whole has been to make them see more clearly the social world in which we live. We all possess social experiences, the data on which sociology is founded. The future of our democracy is closely tied up with our ability or inability to observe the social scene and then act as intelligent men and women in taking steps to make each community economically more secure, richer socially and culturally, and in all phases of life more truly American.

A. F. HARMAN,
President

July 15, 1940

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INTRODUCTION

"Where there is no vision . . . the people perish."

This age-old prophecy fulfils itself relentlessly against individuals, nations and races.

The southern States under the sponsorship of the Southern Governors' Conference are launching a ten-year program for balanced progress. Alabama is having its part in this program. One of the most helpful contributions to this program would be a state-wide inventory showing just where we are now, and if all of the counties could do what has just been done in Chilton County, we would be well on the way.

In reading this bulletin I was tremendously impressed with the amount of help and the kind of help that the authors had, all voluntary. I was interested in the fact that the study was sponsored by Alabama College at Montevallo and that the Bureau of Agricultural Economics cooperated.

I was impressed with the fact that community life found its center so often in a rural church. If a school was not nearby, it was because good roads had made possible our consolidated school program. I was impressed with the fact that Negro neighborhoods followed the same pattern as the white in the reasons given for sticking together as a neighborhood; and that the Negroes, wherever given the school opportunities, supported their schools loyally and faithfully.

I want to congratulate Alabama College for sponsoring this inventory of their neighboring county. If we are to have vision, if we are to progress, if we are to want something better for tomorrow, it is so worth while to have a definite starting time and place.

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Sanders and Dr. Ensinger for their tireless effort on this job and at the same time I would like also to join them in their acknowledgment and thanks to all the institutions, groups and individuals who made this study possible.

DONALD COMER, *Chairman for Alabama*
In the Southwide Campaign for Balanced
Prosperity in the South 1940-50

PART ONE

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE COMMUNITY?

THE CONVENTIONAL VIEW CENTERS

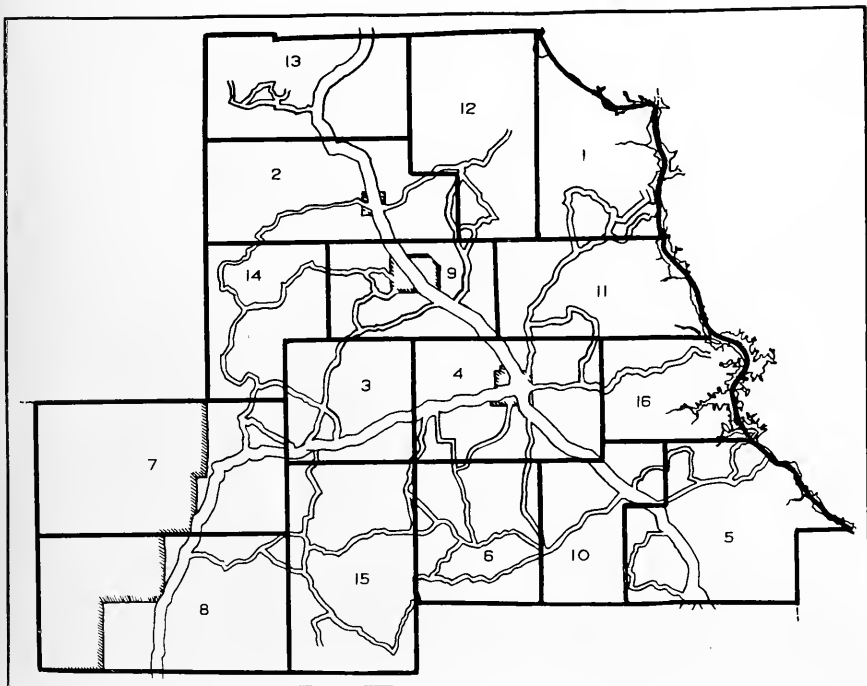


AROUND MAIN STREET

For many, the community stops at the city limits of the shopping center. Farmers and their families are not considered a part of this community although their dollars make possible the stores on Main Street, as well as the churches, schools, residences and parks around Main Street.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE COMMUNITY?

THE POLITICAL VIEW CONSISTS OF



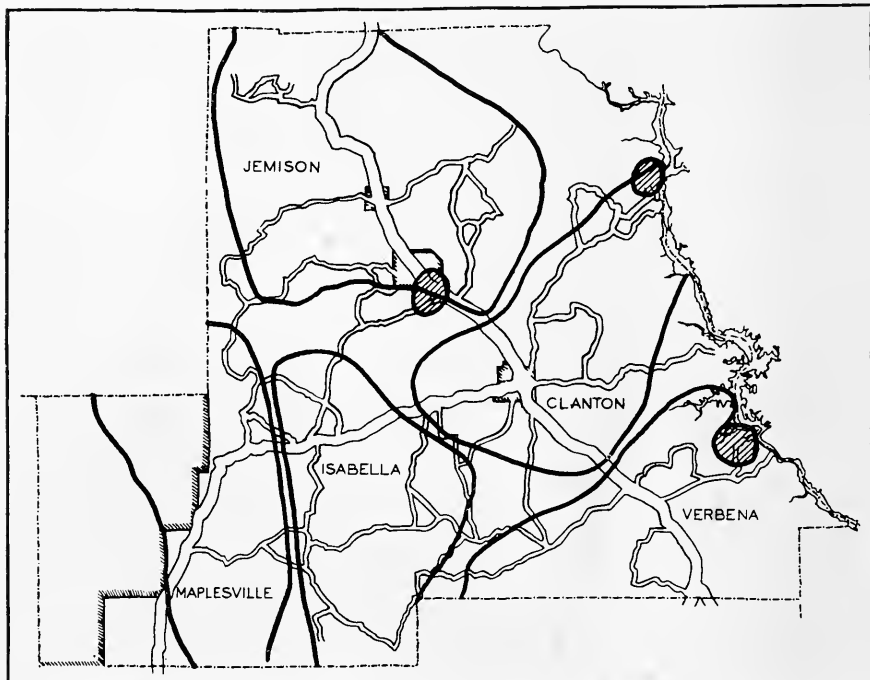
MAP 1

BEATS AND PRECINCTS

Political boundaries are artificial boundaries which only occasionally follow the natural groupings of the people.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE COMMUNITY?

SCHOOL PEOPLE OFTEN THINK OF THE COMMUNITY IN TERMS OF



MAP 2

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS

The consolidated school is an important community influence. The area it serves may be identical with the natural community, but in many cases it serves parts of two or three communities—thus becoming a divisive rather than an integrating force.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE COMMUNITY?

AGRICULTURAL PLANNING REVOLVES AROUND

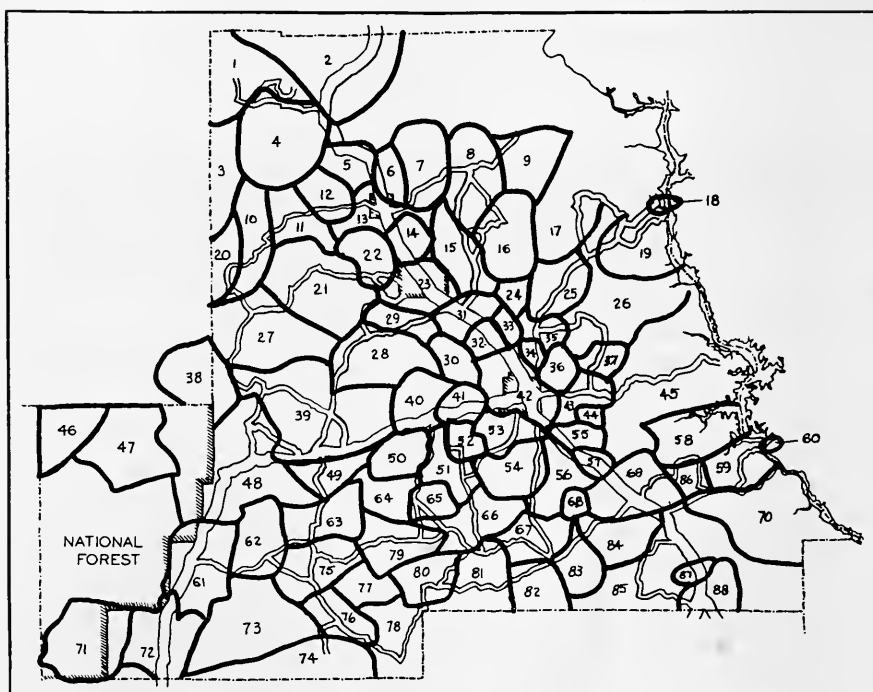


LAND USE AREAS

These are woodland, pasture and cropland areas. Their limits do not necessarily correspond with the limits to be used as the bases for programs dealing with people, their institutions, or social organizations.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE COMMUNITY?

THE ALL-AROUND VIEW SEES PEOPLE LIVING IN



MAP 3

NEIGHBORHOODS*

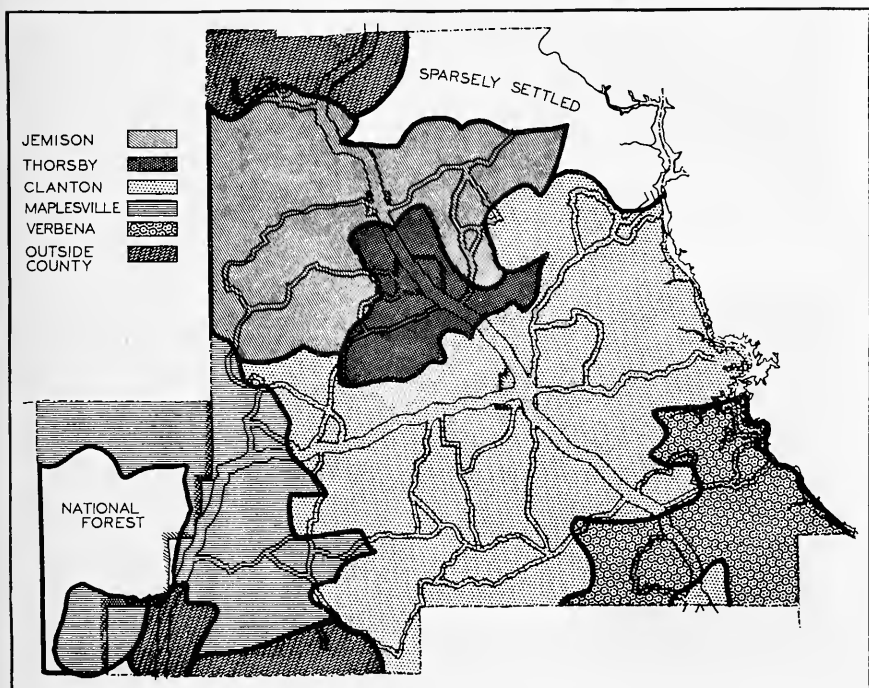
Eighty-six white neighborhoods were discovered in Chilton County. Each of these is a geographic area identified by a commonly-used name. People within each neighborhood are fairly well-acquainted through social visiting resulting from meeting each other at the church and store—or fishing on the creek bank. Thus a feeling of belonging exists in the minds of the people; to them, this is “our” neighborhood.

*Legend

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Dry Valley | 19. Macedonia "A" | 37. Sunshine | 54. Mt. Pisgah | 72. Riderville |
| 2. Minooka | 20. Union Springs | 38. Cox | 55. Poplar Springs | 73. Alpine |
| 3. Free Springs | 21. Pleasant Grove "B" | 39. Isabella | 56. Maple Spring | 74. Pilgrims Rest |
| 4. Providence "A" | 22. Pates Chapel | 40. Liberty | 57. Thomas | 75. Vermont |
| 5. Oak Grove "A" | 23. Thorsby | 41. Baker | 58. Big Spring (Negro) | 76. Pletcher |
| 6. Oak Hill | 24. Robinson Springs | 42. Clanton | 59. Shady Grove | 77. Antioch |
| 7. Rocky Mt. | 25. Cane Creek | 43. Concord | 60. Mitchell Dam | 78. Mulberry |
| 8. Union Grove | 26. Refuge | 44. Temple | 61. Stanton | 79. Pools Crossroad |
| 9. Pleasant Hill | 27. Macedonia "B" | 45. Providence "B" | 62. Adams | 80. New Cedron |
| 10. Freeman | 28. Mt. Carmel | 46. County Line | 63. Sardis | 81. Bethsalem |
| 11. Mars Hill | 29. Cedar Grove | 47. Pleasant Grove "A" | 64. Mt. Nebo | 82. Bethany |
| 12. Center Hill | 30. Mt. Pleasant | 48. Maplesville | 65. Fairview | 83. Eastview |
| 13. Jemison | 31. New Salem | 49. Jonestown | 66. Shiloh | 84. Floyd |
| 14. Maynard Chapel | 32. Lomax | 50. Pleasant Grove "C" | 67. Enterprise | 85. Verbena |
| 15. Collins Chapel | 33. Jackson Chapel | 51. County Training (Negro) | 68. Bethel | 86. Oak Grove "B" |
| 16. Mineral Springs | 34. Friendship | 52. Highland | 69. Cooper | 87. Midway |
| 17. Mullins | 35. Pine Dale | 53. Samaria | 70. Corinth | 88. Mountain Creek |
| 18. Lay Dam | 36. Walnut Creek | | 71. West Chilton | |

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE COMMUNITY?

THE ALL-AROUND VIEW SEES PEOPLE LIVING IN



MAP 4

NATURAL COMMUNITIES

People from the neighborhoods of Chilton County are in the habit of going out of the neighborhood for many things: to get cotton ginned, to trade—or to see a Wild West show. The majority of the people in any given neighborhood go most often to the same place, thus identifying themselves and their neighborhood with that place. Similarly, because the people of several neighborhoods use this same place, a larger social grouping comes into being; when mapped this resembles a cluster of neighborhoods and is the *natural community*.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOCIAL VIEW

For the



BUSINESS MAN

A forward looking business man is a community builder. Good stores attract people from miles around to the shopping center. Most businesses serve an area which reaches beyond the city limits; that is, people outside the city limits are part of the business community and should be included when plans are made for improving community life.



MINISTER

A strong church is well organized: not only does the wide-awake minister understand the social groupings within the town, but he also knows about the social groupings outside the town—how people live together in neighborhoods. He plans for his church to serve these neighborhoods.



COUNTY AGENT

Families learn best when associating informally with other families whom they know. The neighborhood is the best of such informal associations. Many neighborhoods already are attached to larger communities. Therefore, when big meetings are held, invitations should be on the basis of these existing attachments rather than on the basis of artificial political boundaries. In natural communities patterns of cooperation are already well established.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOCIAL VIEW

For the

Although organized on a county basis the satisfactory welfare program takes community differences into account. Locating communities on a map and characterizing them after investigation gives the careful welfare worker a clearer picture of the clients' situation and needs.



WELFARE WORKER

School consolidation creates new community attachments. There is much less friction in a consolidated program when the plan of organization includes those outlying neighborhoods which already were becoming a part of the community in which the school is located. Thus school consolidation is more than a matter of bus routes; it considers the community a social product made up of shopping centers and satellite neighborhoods.



EDUCATOR

Newspapers not only record the events but also shape the public opinion of the community. They should, therefore, help formulate and support those programs which build sound community life.



NEWSPAPER EDITOR



PART TWO

The purpose of Part Two is to describe the neighborhoods and natural communities of Chilton County in order to clarify and set forth more completely the ALL-AROUND VIEW OF THE COMMUNITY.

THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHILTON COUNTY

WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS

(See map 3, page fourteen)



A newly-painted church standing in the pine woods, a drab, untidy general store where two sandy roads cross, a three-room school high on a wind-swept, red-clay hill, a burial ground almost overgrown with grass or perhaps a grist mill announcing itself afar by the putt-putt of its erratic gas motor—these, alone or in combination, are the visible signs of a Chilton County neighborhood.

The rest has to be taken on faith—the houses down this road and that, the few organizations to which these people belong, and their manner of life together. But no one can understand Chilton County without understanding these neighborhoods, elusive as they may seem at first. It is with neighbors at church, the mill or in the store that farmers visit informally and satisfy their need for human association. It is to these neighbors that one turns in case of emergency.

There are eighty¹ white rural neighborhoods in the county, most of them well-defined. They average thirty-five families² but vary considerably in area since the soil determines to a marked degree the density of settlement in different parts of the county. But wherever you go the well-informed inhabitant can tell you exactly where his neighborhood ends and the next one begins; if he has a leisure moment, and most likely he has, he can name one by one the families comprising his neighborhood. Thus the neighborhood exists in the minds of the people although it seldom appears on maps.

Few economic needs are satisfied in the neighborhood. Visiting a neighborhood at random you would most surely find a church and as likely as not a small general store. The odds are slightly against finding a local school since children from most of the localities are transported in buses to

1. Exclusive of the community centers.

2. Mean, 34; median, 36.

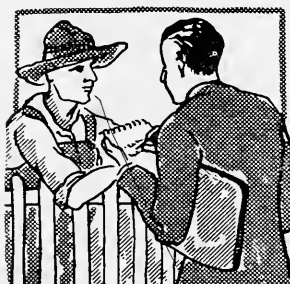
the consolidated buildings in larger centers. The study of services provided by the 76 neighborhoods surveyed revealed that

- 23 had only a church
- 8 had a church, school, store, grist mill
- 6 had a church, store, grist mill
- 6 had a church, store
- 6 had a church, school

The remaining 27 neighborhoods had some variation of the above-named services adding once or twice a barber shop, a post office, a cotton gin or a sawmill. However, no other combination occurred more than three times. Looking at the services from another point of view we find that 62 neighborhoods had churches, 37 had stores, 33 had schools, and 30 had grist mills. No other service was mentioned more than three times.

It is therefore quite clear that the neighborhood is not necessarily an economic unit which will die if larger places absorb more trade. In fact, it may even persist although the church or the school which formed the center of its life ceases to exist. Barnstown (West Chilton) is facing this same situation since its school became consolidated. The people there say, "We don't have any social life any more since the school has gone." Yet the neighborhood still persists as a grouping to which its people are intensely loyal. A feeling of resentment against the outside may knit the families together more closely than would have been the case had the institution not disappeared.

We wanted to know what made these neighborhoods band together, what made a man include one family and exclude another family a little more distant in the reckoning of his neighborhood. After talking for a week with people on their farms and around the general stores we made up a list of the most commonly-given answers to the question: "What are the chief reasons people give for sticking together as a neighborhood?" Then in our survey of the neighborhoods throughout the county we asked the person being interviewed to check which reason or reasons described the situation in his locality. This is what we found:



REASON	Only reason given	Given along with others	Total times mentioned
Just always have stuck together.....	25	20	45
Belong to same church.....	12	16	28
Kinship	2	17	19
Loyalty to local school.....	7	5	12
Economic ties	4	8	12

If we are willing to take at face value the interpretations of the farmers and housewives who live in these open-country settlements we find that the table shows us more about what a neighborhood is *not* than about what it actually is. In Chilton County the neighborhood is not a school-district closely linked with "the little red schoolhouse," nor is it just an economic unit, although common economic interests must be taken for granted. *The neighborhood is rather a traditional social relationship among families in an area small enough for face-to-face contacts.* Children inherit this traditional relationship just as they inherit their kinship system. New families become a part of the neighborhood in the same way that an acquired uncle becomes a part of the family upon his marriage to Aunt Judith. In one case, the relationship is established upon "moving in"; in the other, upon "taking the vow." Assimilation into a neighborhood like that into a family takes time, but when once accepted the person's position becomes secure. Religious affiliation and kinship play a role in from one-third to one-fourth of the neighborhoods.

As we shall see in a later section, there are very few organizations in the rural neighborhoods, showing the informal nature of social contacts there. In Chilton County out of 76 neighborhoods surveyed

- 27 had no organization
- 33 had one organization
- 12 had two organizations
- 4 had three or more

Where only one organization existed it was connected with the church in 12 cases, with farm programs in 13 cases, with tent meetings in 4 cases, with the school twice, social clubs once and conservation of wild life once. Where two organizations existed at the time of the survey they were paired as follows: church and farm—5 times; farm and school—3 times; church and school—1 time; church and tent meeting—1 time; farm and tent meeting—1 time; church and recreational—1 time. This is not to imply that there exists any tie-up between the organizations but simply that the two of them are supported by the same neighborhood. We found social or recreational clubs only in the controlled community of the Alabama Power Company at Mitchell Dam and at Lay Dam (where recreational halls are provided), and in New Salem and Corinth. Corinth is unique in having four organizations: one church, one conservation, one Clodhopper Funster Club, and one Fire Prevention Club. The two Wildlife Conservation Clubs were near Verbena, where a resident has founded a bird sanctuary.

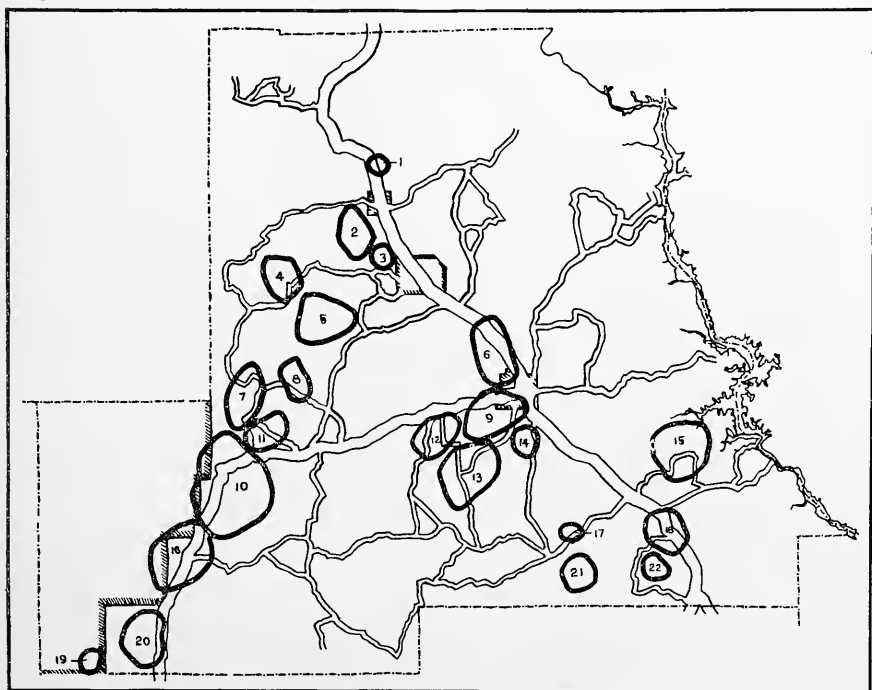
The people of each neighborhood on the whole feel attached to some larger center where they go for services* which the neighborhood does not provide. As the ties with these centers are described in connection with each of the natural communities they will not be discussed here. There are many indications that the contacts between the rural people and these centers are becoming more frequent, partly as a result of school consolida-

tion, improvement of roads, operation of buses on Saturday afternoon between the outlying districts and the shopping center. The mail-order houses receive much of the rural trade. This was shown especially in answer to the question on the school questionnaires, "Where does your family buy most of its clothes?" Housewives have also grown very dependent upon the rolling stores operating from two or three centers. But the mail-order houses and the rolling stores cannot stop the flow of traffic to town and the consequent building up of the natural community, the social unit with which this study is primarily concerned. The neighborhood, however, is still a social grouping which cannot be overlooked whatever may be the conjectures as to its future.

NEGRO NEIGHBORHOODS



If you asked a Negro farmer chopping cotton what neighborhood you were in, he might lean on his hoe and reasonably ask: "You mean white folks' or cullud folks' neighborhood?" White people may go to a church which gives their neighborhood its name while the Negroes living nearby may feel identified with their own church in some spot a mile or two away. In other words, the fifteen open-country Negro neighborhoods mapped in Chilton County differed in name¹ and area from the white neighborhoods of the same region. On the other hand, in the immediate vicinity of the largest population centers (Clanton, Jemison, Stanton, Verbena, Maplesville, and Ridersville) the Negroes used the same place names as the whites.



MAP 5

THE NEGRO NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHILTON COUNTY

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. St. Paul | 7. Pleasant Hill | 13. County Training | 18. Verbena |
| 2. Jemison | 8. Campbell | 14. Hopewell | 19. Mt. Zion |
| 3. Union | 9. Clanton | 15. Big Springs | 20. Ridersville |
| 4. Shiloh | 10. Maplesville | 16. Stanton | 21. Lily Hill |
| 5. Beulah | 11. New Convert | 17. Cross Roads | 22. Mt. Creek |
| 6. Lomax | 12. Morning Star | | |

1 Only exceptions are Mountain Creek and Lomax.

The twenty-two Negro neighborhoods contain an estimated total of 890 families. Clanton has 375, or 42 percent, of all these families; the next largest neighborhoods being those in Maplesville (75 families) and Verbena (60 families). The median for all neighborhoods is 19 families, showing that the three neighborhoods just mentioned are unusually large.

Negro neighborhoods follow the same pattern as the white in reasons given for sticking together as a neighborhood.

REASON	Only reason given	Given along with others	Total times mentioned
Just always have stuck together.....	7	2	9
Belong to same church.....	1	7	8
Kinship	2	4	6
Loyalty to local school.....	2	6	8
Economic ties	1	0	1

Every neighborhood had a school and all but one had a church. This would show the influence of these institutions in collecting into a social grouping the widely-scattered rural Negroes. All neighborhoods possessed a burial ground; most of them had stores and grist mills, these being owned either by whites or by Negroes.

The value placed by the Negroes upon education is shown by their organizational support of the schools. More than two-thirds of the neighborhoods had active school organizations, about one-half have church organizations, one-third have burial societies, and one-fourth farm organizations. The fraternal bodies are found in Maplesville and Jemison, as well as in Clanton. Only one neighborhood was without an organization of any kind, though it did have a church and an elementary school.

COMMUNITIES OF THE COUNTY

CLANTON

THE TOWN*



Clanton is an adolescent business town of four thousand people; it is adolescent in its optimism and energy as well as in its rapid growth. It is primarily a trade center where people come from miles around to push through crowded streets and wait in line to enter a popular "Five and Ten."

The aristocratic principle, which governs life in Verbena, finds little acceptance in Clanton where the old families have been overwhelmingly out-numbered by the incoming business people.

One family has lived in Clanton for a century and in a few other families sons have succeeded their fathers in businesses established half a century ago but these are decidedly in the minority today. The reason given for Clanton's rapid rise as a commercial center is the opening up of the rich farm land in the region after the lumber mills moved away. Today Clanton has an unusually varied group of business enterprises, an airport, as well as two newspapers, Democratic and Republican, whose editors get along amicably in spite of bitter editorial combat at election time.

Like the Maplesville of today, Clanton was a highly individualistic community until the formation of the Kiwanis Club in 1928. By endorsing needed civic projects and by bringing about friendship between business rivals this club has assumed such a place of prominence that it was named second only to the church as an agency influencing public opinion. As a source of community leadership it was named first nineteen times, far outstripping the second-place organization which had been named only twice. One man phrased the situation this way: "Twenty years ago it was every man for himself and plenty of hard feeling. The Kiwanis Club was organized and they have made it hard for the unconcerned, selfish fellow." The Kiwanis Club cooperates willingly with other more recently organized civic groups.

Whenever men succeed in business their wives almost always turn to clubs and organizations. In Clanton the women have active missionary societies, two P.-T. A. organizations, the Pilot Club (civic), four bridge

*In such a brief description the viewpoints of all individuals interviewed cannot be set forth. Rather, this is an analysis of what seems to be the prevailing opinion about the social organization of the community and is based on information given by local people themselves as they look impersonally at their community.

clubs, the Music Appreciation Club and the Study Club. Many people feel that the community is over-organized, but it is to be noted that they are the ones who usually hold offices in several groups.

There is a readiness on the part of organized leaders to cooperate with other organizations. The civic groups (Kiwanis, Lions, Pilot) set the example. Organizations which have not actively cooperated recently but are quite willing to do so if called upon are the American Legion, the Music Appreciation Club, the Boy Scouts and the Baptist Women's Missionary Society. This list, of course, is only partially complete but illustrates the cooperative pattern of interaction which characterizes these formal groups. The Baptist and the Methodist churches cooperate in civic projects, union services and revivals. When the high school burned last year, the Baptist Church housed classes for two full terms.

The adolescence of Clanton is shown in still another way than that mentioned in the opening paragraph; it is undeveloped and even gawky in spots. It has not yet worked out a well-rounded civic program; that would be expecting too much for its span of life. The development of phases other than business has been neglected. One citizen commented: "Clanton has as yet very little community pride. The attempts to promote libraries have failed through public apathy. People of the town are mostly from the farms and have very little civic consciousness." There are no supervised playgrounds for children, few recreational facilities for young people other than three pool halls and the movies. With increasing maturity Clanton will meet these problems if the mayor, to whom credit is given on all sides for much of Clanton's progress, can have his way. The chief community needs as cited by persons interviewed were a library (mentioned 20 times), recreational center (17 times), swimming pools (11 times), park (7 times), more industries (7 times), cemetery (6 times). To achieve most of these, civic cooperation will be necessary.



The presence of manufacturing plants and a lumber mill brings into the community workers with interests different from those living on the better streets. This is one basis of social stratification. The feeling in this respect is best illustrated by the answers obtained to the question: Is there any evidence of social stratification or distinguishing of social classes? "not marked"; "yes, but no hard feelings—you just fall into one class or another"; "no more than you find anywhere else"; "like all towns there are some who think they are aristocrats"; "very little—all for one, one for all"; "some upper society, some lower—have both in Clanton"; "yes, three or four different sets. Clanton people are not very nice to these on relief"; "yes, some among the women"; "no

lines drawn here much"; "We think we are very nice, newcomers think we are awful. Social stratification not very pronounced here."

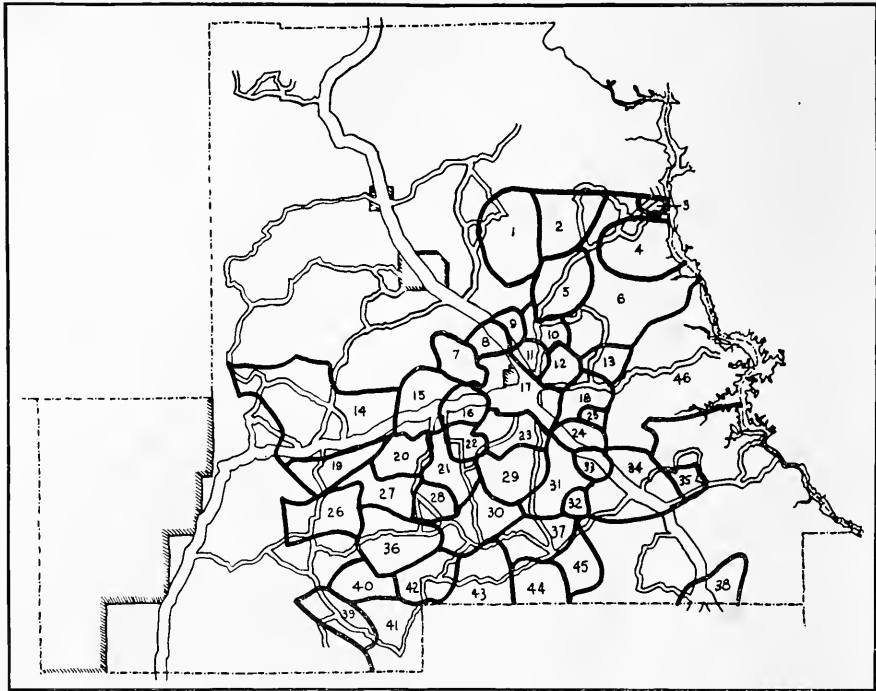
The dominant tradition underlying the social organization of the Clanton community is "if it's good for business it's good for Clanton." This seems to explain why, in the past, little interest has been shown in a library. The answer to the question: "How can a library help business?" has not been found. But being thoughtful of others, whether tourist, salesman or farmer, does help business. The merchants of Clanton have learned that cooperation and friendliness, like honesty, are the best policy. This makes Clanton a pleasant place in which to live. One man put it this way: "Few people ever move away from Clanton. If you live here a while you like it and want to stay."

Another indication of this cooperation for business ends is found in the welcome given to a new store which opened up while this survey was in progress. The leading merchants ran these advertisements in the local newspapers:

CLILTON COUNTY NEWS		
<p>WE EXTEND A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP ★ to an up-to-date MERCANTILE STORE</p>	<p>FROM THE YOUNGEST TO THE OLDEST WELCOME TO CLANTON</p>	<p>ALWAYS GLAD TO WELCOME A NEW BUSINESS ASSOCIATE</p>
<p>WE ARE GLAD TO HAVE YOU WE WELCOME YOU ♦ as a friend ♦ as a neighbor MAY SUCCESS BE YOURS.!</p>	<p>ANOTHER FINE STORE ● FOR OUR GROWING CITY</p>	

50981

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY



MAP 6

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY OF CLANTON

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mineral Springs | 17. Clanton | 32. Bethel |
| 2. Mullins | 18. Concord | 33. Thomas |
| 3. Lay Dam | 19. Jonestown | 34. Cooper |
| 4. Macedonia "A" | 20. Pleasant Grove "C" | 35. Oak Grove "B" |
| 5. Cane Creek | 21. County Training (Negro) | 36. Pool's Crossroads |
| 6. Refuge | 22. Highland | 37. Enterprise |
| 7. Mt. Pleasant | 23. Samaria | 38. Mountain Creek |
| 8. Lomax | 24. Poplar Springs | 39. Pletcher |
| 9. Jackson's Chapel | 25. Temple | 40. Antioch |
| 10. Pine Dale | 26. Sardis | 41. Mulberry |
| 11. Friendship | 27. Mt. Nebo | 42. New Cedron |
| 12. Walnut Creek | 28. Fairview | 43. Bethsalem |
| 13. Sunshine | 29. Mt. Pisgah | 44. Bethany |
| 14. Isabella | 30. Shiloh | 45. East View |
| 15. Liberty | 31. Maple Springs | 46. Providence "B" |
| 16. Baker | | |

Forty-four white neighborhoods feel more closely attached to Clanton than to any other larger center. This accounts for half of the county's neighborhoods and shows above all else the commanding influence Clanton has over the county. These neighborhoods are very different. There is one near the Coosa River where people fish for a living and, in the words of a former leader in the Baptist church, "just got so mean drinking, etc.,

until it broke the church up." In contrast, the Maple Springs neighborhood is characterized by active community cooperation as was shown a few years ago when the church burned. Two men put a saw mill on the church ground and sawed the lumber for a new church; the other people donated timber and labor. The only cost was the hardware. One meeting day was missed. Then, there is Friendship, which the map will show to be almost a part of Clanton proper but which insists upon maintaining its identity as a neighborhood.



Cooper is a sub-community, which, were it not so near Clanton would probably achieve considerable economic importance.

How has Clanton been so successful in attracting these forty neighborhoods to itself? Clanton, of course, is the county seat but many county seats in neighboring counties, despite political advantages and central locations, have not grown like Clanton. This leads to a consideration of farm-village relationships.

In the first place, the farmers' connections with Clanton are primarily commercial. There is little social participation on the part of rural people in the town organizations, but over a period of years the rural people have formed the habit of going to town whenever they felt the desire to go anywhere. It is this Clanton-going habit, this desire "to see and be seen", that links the distant neighborhoods with Clanton.

In the second place, there is a difference of opinion among Clanton leaders as to farm-village relationships, though the consensus is that the situation is not yet what it should be but is steadily growing better. The reasons most often given for the more friendly contacts are twofold: first, the county is evenly divided between two political parties, thus making it necessary for politicians really to go out of town and "shake hands for votes"; and secondly, the work of the Kiwanis Club. This organization, mentioned in the description of Clanton, takes from 50 to 300 farmers to Auburn every year to visit the State College of Agriculture, it holds meetings out in the various neighborhoods where each Kiwanian invites a farmer as guest and pays for two dinners, the money going to the cause supported by the local women serving the lunch. The County Fair held each year at the Clanton Airport attracts 12,000 paid admissions. The mayor of Clanton insists in all of his talks of dedication and welcome that "Clanton needs the country people and the country people need Clanton; that the larger Clanton gets the more taxes they will have to build roads and schools in the country." He says that he has always seen to it that at least half the WPA workers on any job in Clanton were rural people.

Because of Clanton's growth as a trade center most of the competing communities, which once were the same size as Clanton, if not larger, find cause for resentment. Many of the complaints center around the way tax money is spent for schools and roads, with the feeling that Clanton is favored most. This study does not attempt to judge the validity of these complaints but finds them of social significance in inter-community relationships.

The Negro neighborhoods, both rural and urban, are part of the natural community of Clanton. Two rural neighborhoods feel attached to Clanton because they say that they receive better service there. So keenly does one neighborhood feel this that its people pass through one shopping center in order to get to Clanton. The chief characteristic of this community is its poverty since crops failed last year; no other work is available and few of the families are certified for relief.



The second community is divided by conflict, a fact of much significance in considering it as part of the larger community. In the words of the investigators: "The church furnishes the problem for this community. A split occurred among its members due to immorality claims filed against the pastor. The pastor and his followers accused his persecutors of similar charges and withdrew to establish a church of their own. More than half of the people followed the pastor. These people supported him only a short while and the church then disbanded. Some of these people joined the Methodist church in the community and some went back to the original church, while some are not connected with any church. The church split occurred four years ago. Two years ago the ex-pastor was appointed teacher of the school. He associates with his original followers and attempts to influence others to join this group. This affects the success of the school."

The 375 Negro families in Clanton form a neighborhood of their own just as truly as do farmers living in the red-clay hills. We found out that the Negroes of Clanton felt much superior to the members of their own race who farmed; the farmers, in turn, felt inferior. Thus this separation between the rural and urban Negro means that a member of one group cannot adequately represent the other in any social planning on a community or county basis. The Negro assistant in the study, who is a trained observer, lived for a week in Clanton while collecting organizational and leadership information. Her general impression of the Clanton Negro neighborhood is of interest in this connection:

"In Clanton I found available services and enterprises for comfortable living. It was interesting to find social and economic organizations functioning so creditably. Social classes exist with economic standing and intelligence furnishing the line of demarcation. The P.-T. A. and church organizations, as well as the Masonic and Eastern Star Lodges, are very active. The homes, general standard of living and economic status are far above those in other sections of the county. Negro business enterprises include a pressing plant, barber shop, pool room, and two cafeterias. The pressing plant, which was owned and operated by a Negro, was recently consolidated with a white pressing plant with the Negro proprietor having the controlling power and employing both white and Negro workers. The school is a four-teacher elementary type. An adult school is operated in the community. A lunch room was built and operated this term with government assistance. Church services are held every Sunday with the Baptists and the Methodists using alternate Sundays. Church edifices are very nice. One person interviewed said, 'We pay our pastor twenty-five dollars a Sunday and he actually gets it. In fact our church doesn't owe anybody; we are up with our pastor, our light bill is paid, and we don't owe our organist anything'."

Conclusion: To summarize, what are the outstanding characteristics of this large area known as the Clanton community, which runs across the county from the northeast to the southwest?

1. Its structure consists of the town of Clanton plus forty white and three Negro neighborhoods. (This includes the Negro neighborhood of Clanton.)

2. Clanton with 4000 people and 105 services is the center of 1768 families (7,330 people) and 182 neighborhood services.

3. The dominant tradition of the town of Clanton is the saying, "If it's good for business it's good for Clanton." Acting on this principle the merchants cooperate in efforts to bring the farmer to town. The fact that Clanton is the county seat and is the center of a network of roads works to the advantage of its merchants.

4. The attachments of the outlying neighborhoods to Clanton is largely economic and educational. The people from outside the town of Clanton mix little in its social, organizational or church life.

5. This community as a whole associates in an unorganized, hit-or-miss fashion on Saturday afternoon in town or at an annual Kiwanis County Fair. There is no formal community-wide organization.

JEMISON

THE VILLAGE:*

A motorist speeding between Birmingham and Clanton thinks of Jemison in terms of a school, a row of houses, filling stations and small sawmills. He misses the main business section where trade is carried on in an easy-going, lackadaisical, somnolent manner. One merchant there would qualify for a Believe-It-Or-Not. He boasts that in two years he has not been over two blocks from his work, not even to the bus station across the railroad. He goes out the back of his store to his home in the next block. He has been to Birmingham only one time in his life al-



though he has a married son there. He owns two farms not far from Jemison but has not been out on them in three years. Nor has he been to Clanton in three years, although he does his banking there.

Young people call Jemison dead. True enough, there are few recreational or economic opportunities for them there. Adults who have once lived in other communities upon becoming acquainted with Jemison people accuse them of being "set in their ways" because Jemison does not support many civic projects. There is, however, a consistency about the community organization of Jemison which, if understood, explains why the community behaves as it does. It is simply that the Jemison business men pursue an active policy of being out-of-date, of keeping behind the times. Perhaps they were left behind in the rush of business years ago but they certainly are making no effort to catch up nowadays. But they have a reason for this.

Their explanation would run something like this: "Our trade is rural. The more countrified we are, the more trade we'll draw in." The leading hardware merchant calls himself "The farmers' friend". This business creed sets the tone of life in Jemison. The creed may be based on fact or fancy; it may increase or it may decrease business now or in years to come. But it does exist and must be taken into account in any sociological interpretation.

Some of the professional men of the community and a number of the wives of the business men do not share this philosophy and are bent on civic improvement. They want to make Jemison an attractive village so that outsiders will come in to establish residence and perhaps bring some industry with an added payroll. But the local merchants are not interested in the talk of a payroll; in fact, they would fight the establishment of any industry or even the dressing up of the community

*See footnote, page 25.

if they thought farm people would feel any the less at home. There are concessions which the business men have made, however.

Between the row of stores and the railroad track, the road was full of ruts in 1936. The women could not get the men to do anything about it so they took rakes and hoes and went down to clean up the place themselves. One by one the men hanging around the stores felt ashamed and came to take over a rake or a hoe. The result was the creation of a little park which was planted in trees and shrubs according to a plan worked out by horticulturalists in Auburn. The city now pays \$1 a month for the upkeep of the park.

Two years ago a young woman who taught in Auburn during the school term was spending the summer at her home in Jemison. She organized a community playground with the help of some of the young people and financial assistance from the Town Council. Everyone seemed

satisfied. There was consternation in the community, however, when some of the girls began to play tennis in shorts. The opposition to such attire did not arise from the women of the community but from the business men who again were consistent with their conservative philosophy.



As would be expected, social control is still very rigid in Jemison. The community is not gossipy but kindly. However, one who does not conform is ostracised. There is considerable opposition to women teachers smoking or to any teacher playing bridge. If the moral code is broken the community generally accepts the individual provided the family forgives everything.

Women find their formal social life in the Methodist and Baptist Missionary Societies or in the P.-T. A. and Eastern Star. The men are not joiners. They did not take the trouble to give a hearing to the organizer of the Lions' Club when he sought to establish a club in Jemison. Two doctors in order to affiliate with this civic group must go to Thorsby, six miles distant.

The merchants thoroughly approve of the local school which has done more than anything else to break down farm-village differences. One merchant is impressed by the fact that it is impossible to tell the difference between a country girl and city girl since their wearing apparel and conduct are the same. He says the consolidated school is responsible for that. But what really makes the school the chief point of organization in the community is its rich program of vocational home economics and vocational agriculture. The Future Farmers of America are active and receive the support of the business men where other extra-curricular activities would go begging. Indeed, one informant, when

asked. "What holds the community together?" said "Farming". The school does not overlook this factor. Some of the older families not closely identified with the business men dislike the invasion of bus children into Jemison but usually maintain a discreet silence on this score. These families staunchly support the local churches where they count upon the active cooperation of teachers.

Since the school is the only agency supported by all people in the village as well as around Jemison, it is often thought of as a school community, with the implication that the school rather than the business center keeps the larger community together. This would be denied by most business men.

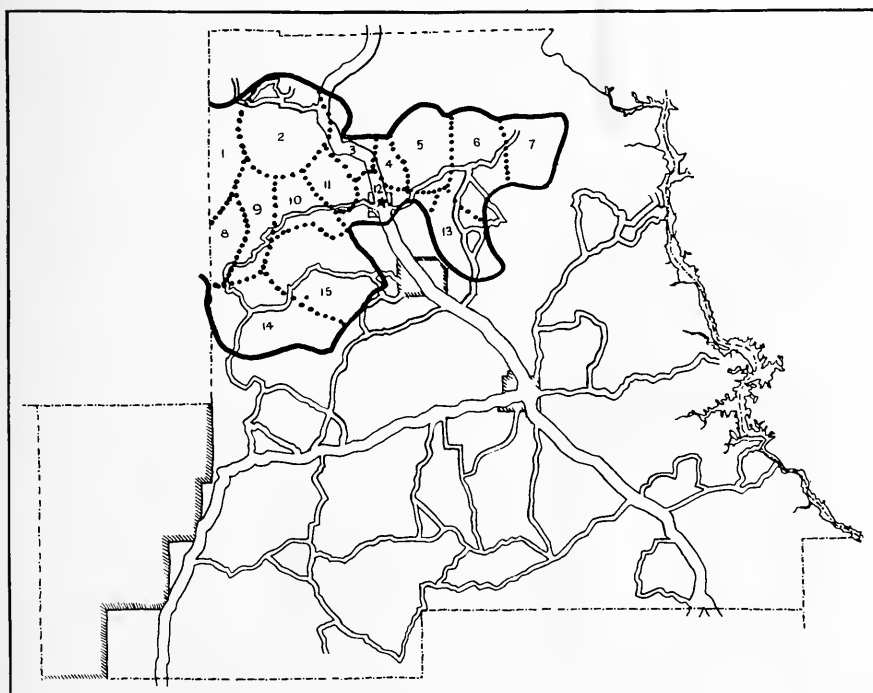
Of course, the merchants are only a part of the population. They have been given such a prominent place in this analysis because their way of looking at things makes Jemison what it is today. They do not worry much about the future and take comfort in the fact that an unusually large number of people ask to be brought back to Jemison for burial when they die.



THE NATURAL COMMUNITY

It is when we look at the natural community of which Jemison is the center that we see the effects of the village's dominant tradition—namely, business conservatism. In no other community did we find such a warm understanding between farmer and villager as we did in the Jemison community.

The size of the community is second only to Clanton, the county seat. It includes fourteen white neighborhoods and four Negro neighborhoods in addition to the village of Jemison.



MAP 7

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY OF JEMISON

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Free Springs | 6. Union Grove | 11. Center Hill |
| 2. Providence "A" | 7. Pleasant Hill | 12. Jemison |
| 3. Oak Grove "A" | 8. Union Springs | 13. Collins Chapel |
| 4. Oak Hill | 9. Freeman | 14. Macedonia "B" |
| 5. Rocky Mount | 10. Mars Hill | 15. Pleasant Grove "B" |

Looking first at the white neighborhoods, we see that they vary greatly in characteristics, but all feel more closely attached to the village of Jemison than to any other place outside their neighborhood. Some of these neighborhoods center around a church. For instance, Rocky Mount has a Nazarene Church to which people are very loyal. The owner of the store there said, "A family couldn't find a better community in which to live." There is an annual "homecoming" every summer and people that once lived in the neighborhood come back for a day. A tent meeting is held once a year. In contrast to Rocky Mount, Free Springs is passing through a period of disorganization. Its attractive church building is now used as a hay barn. Furthermore, the school house is in a deplorable condition. Only three or four families own their farms. One woman described Free Springs by saying: "This was a splen-

did community until all the old citizens died or moved away, and now the young ones just won't go ahead."

Union Grove is a neighborhood in which the people have cooperated in building a rock wall and entrance into their cemetery. They also landscaped and set out shrubbery around their church. The men of this neighborhood are eager to learn new agricultural methods and many of them attend an evening school held once a week in the neighborhood by the vocational teacher at Jemison. The bus driver pointed out that tenants liked and tried to get into this neighborhood. The men are trying to get the Rural Electrification line through Union Grove. The women enjoy their club work.



Collins Chapel is described as a "splendid farm community" where most of the farms are individually owned. Although this neighborhood is very close to Thorsby the people of Collins Chapel insist on sending their children to the Jemison school. Several of the neighborhoods around Jemison are connected with the Farmers' Union, preferring it to the state-endorsed Farm Bureau.

Another neighborhood "stuck together", according to its leading citizen, because of bootlegging. He said that the people were so organized that an officer could not come into the community "without everyone being notified by telephone or gun fire". He also added that it was practically impossible to convict anyone. "Of course it's against the law to make and sell whiskey, but that's the only harm I see in it, for people are only trying to make a living. That includes the deacons in the church, too."

The four Negro neighborhoods—Shiloh, St. Paul, Campbell, and Jemison—differ from one another in much the same way that the white neighborhoods do. Campbell, for instance, is exceptional in that it has no church of its own and its people seldom attend the nearest church three miles distant. This neighborhood is isolated and has few contacts with the world at large except in connection with "getting on relief". Farming is the only occupation.

St. Paul, consisting of 12 families, is an isolated neighborhood, too. It has a church and a school but no burial ground. The reason given for sticking together as a neighborhood is that they "just always have". The school has been in operation just three years and has sixteen students.

Shiloh has twelve families, Jemison's Negro neighborhood has thirty-nine. The Negroes in Jemison take pleasure in showing off their clean, white school to visitors and telling of the active part a few Jemison white people took in making this new building possible.

From the brief descriptions of a few neighborhoods, both white and Negro, it is apparent that there is dissimilarity among them. What is it then about Jemison that draws them there and makes them feel a part of its sphere of influence? First of all, there is Jemison's advantageous geographical location. It has no serious competitor to the north, east or west and is the most convenient center for the northern part of the county. In the second place, the people of Jemison have the faculty of making farmers feel at home in their village. The business men co-operate with the local consolidated school which has a program of vocational agriculture and home economics. Many affairs at the school attract farmers for miles around. The residents of one neighborhood used the Jemison school auditorium to stage a play of their own production in order to raise money for their neighborhood church. In fact, more people said their neighborhoods were attached to Jemison because of the school than for any other reason.

MAPLESVILLE

THE VILLAGE*

In this village of four hundred people, two of the streets are paved; one a "Democratic" street and the other a "Republican" street. The business center consists of four blocks fronting the Clanton-Selma highway on one side and the Mobile and Ohio Railroad on another. Not far away is the Southern Railroad Station. Fifteen of the stores deal in general merchandise, two sell hardware, one drugs, and twelve dry goods. There are



three garages, three filling stations and one automobile dealer. The local bank, two restaurants, two lumber yards, a junk yard, an ice house and two shoe repair shops complete the roll call of other business enterprises. The barber is the "free press" of the community.

Life in Maplesville for many years has been based on an individualistic or "live and let live" principle. One very discriminating woman from an old family said: "I like to live in Maplesville because people leave you alone. You don't have to spend all your time going to things and burdening yourself with civic responsibilities." Another informant said: "Women in Maplesville don't average twelve social calls a year." Here then is a place where individualism rather than community service is a traditional virtue. To what sort of social organization does such a value lead?

For one thing, it develops strong personalities. Maplesville is full of "characters"—people who have followed their own inclinations to such an extent that they differ in marked degree from those about them. Public opinion has not forced them to conform to any set pattern of behavior. In one day in Maplesville one could collect more colorful anecdotes about local people than during a much longer residence in many other communities.

But these strong personalities often clash and rip the community wide open with conflict. There are leaders of factions not on speaking terms; what one leader starts the other may tear down. In interpreting the social scene everybody has his own explanation; that is, there is no common reason given for the source of conflict between the prominent individuals. Some say that the trouble arises out of personal grudges; others say that it is economic competition. Political divisions have played their part since Maplesville had always been Republican until the Roosevelt administration. Most of the people interviewed do say, however, that much of the present difficulty dates back to 1901 when

*See footnote. page 25.

Maplesville was incorporated for a few months. There were those in the village who objected to this incorporation and fought tooth and nail to dissolve it. Finally, they succeeded. Since then, it has been impossible for people to get together on any civic enterprise. Other communities which are incorporated get government projects; but Maplesville receives no such help; county officials surface roads throughout the county but disregard Maplesville's demand that the Montgomery-Tuscaloosa highway be hurried to completion through Chilton county; other communities unite to invite industry but Maplesville, in spite of its excellent highway and railroad connections, loses its lumber mills at periodic intervals and no other industries come in to take their places. One former Maplesville resident said: "It is truly a village of the 'four hundred'. It never will be any larger than four hundred inhabitants because it can't keep any industry." Those who deplore Maplesville's failure to get its share, blame the conflict within the community; some prominent people in Maplesville, however, remain content with things as they are—especially if a new state of affairs should call for increased taxation.

This individualistic strain accompanies the agrarian interest of the inhabitants. Six out of the eight most-named leaders farm as an investment or as a side-line. Even the school principal farms. Maplesville, therefore, is much more closely linked with the agricultural than with the urban viewpoint. This should explain in part the individualism, assuming the validity of the commonly-held belief that farmers tend to be individualists.

In spite of their disagreements the people of Maplesville rally to the aid of any local citizen in trouble. This mutual aid is spontaneous and genuine. No matter how many critical things are said in the intimate gossiping groups these remarks are forgotten when there is need. Furthermore, the people of Maplesville may criticize each other freely among themselves but are quick to defend their neighbors in the presence of outsiders. Such behavior is quite in keeping with the individualistic philosophy for the aid rendered is voluntary and traditional; then, too, it is good policy, for one never knows when one will be in a tight place oneself.



A Maplesville resident pointed out that a state-wide survey showed that they sent more young people to college than did any other locality of similar size in the State.

This was a fact difficult to accept when it was discovered that the people generally did not support their school as loyally as many other communities do. They all greatly admire the school principal and a score show interest in the P.-T. A. Some of the children do not go to school because

their parents cannot see that schooling is necessary. Apparently the school is not generally viewed as an institution to make a better community but more in accordance with the older belief that schooling existed to make a better man. Here again the emphasis is individualistic. Parents send their children off to college for individual prestige and advancement; a local school is a necessary step in the ladder of success.

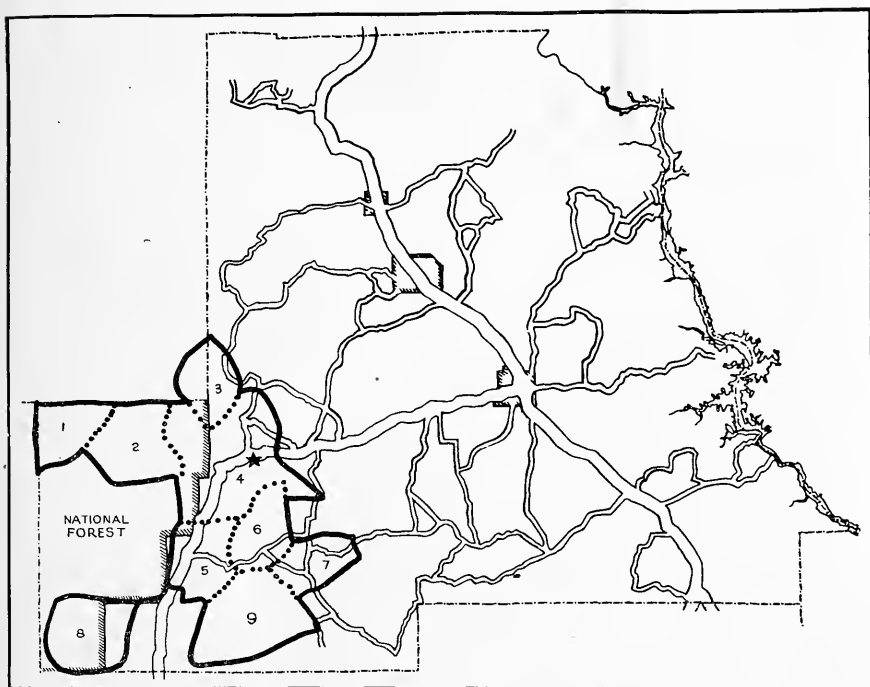
Young people sent off to college do not want to return to Maplesville to live. This is confusing to many parents and is beginning to make them think more analytically of their village. A characteristic remark along this line is that made by a Maplesville native now living in Birmingham who says: "I'm going down to Maplesville to rock awhile." When asked to explain what he meant he said: "First, you go in and shake



hands with everyone and then sit down on the front porch and rock with them; then they bring you in something to drink and you rock some more; afterwards you eat a big meal and then rock until bedtime." Some of the business and professional men, conscious of the present state of affairs, have embarked upon a crusade to create more civic pride and community cooperation. They are encountering the inherited individualism which has so long been characteristic of Maplesville. In the past, conflict may have centered around personality, political, or business differences; now the conflict situation has been redefined as a difference of opinion between those who want to keep the status quo and its accompanying individualism or surrender it in order to achieve growth in community living.

Maplesville has never gone in much for organizations. The Baptist and Methodist women have their missionary societies and the young people their League and B. Y. P. U.; the school has its P.-T. A. and a few of the men their Masonic Lodge. None of these has stressed civic improvement. Therefore, everyone is watching with interest the work of the newly organized Lions Club which is honestly trying to fuse the factions of Maplesville into a group willing to serve the needs of the town.

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY



MAP 8

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY OF MAPLESVILLE

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. County Line | 4. Maplesville | 7. Vermont |
| 2. Pleasant Grove "A" | 5. Stanton | 8. West Chilton |
| 3. Cox | 6. Adams | 9. Alpine |

Three of the eight white neighborhoods attached to Maplesville are split in two by county lines. Cox, due north of Maplesville, has a school teacher living in Chilton County who teaches in Bibb County. She really considers herself from Maplesville although she and her family attend Cox's Chapel in Bibb County. In this neighborhood, as well as in County Line and Pleasant Grove to the east of Maplesville, the Home Demonstration Club is sponsored by the Bibb County authorities. Yet the people feel affiliated with Maplesville. Riderville, south of Maplesville, near the Dallas-Chilton County line, is another example of the artificially split neighborhood. This busy little settlement with freshly painted houses and store is in a good farming section. The people there go to Dallas County for most purchases and feel that they belong to Plantersville even though they use the doctor, dentist and bank in Maplesville. Their church is in Dallas County and Sunday School room is in Chilton County.

The other neighborhoods attached to Maplesville have interesting

features. Stanton has a hundred families and five general stores, thus ranking as one of the largest neighborhoods. Until about two years ago the people in this neighborhood "got along fine." At that time an active church group came in and caused conflict chiefly within families whenever a son, daughter, mother or father decided to join the new sect. Vermont is a neighborhood which is closely tied in with Sardis, a neighborhood affiliated with Clanton. Vermont has the school and Sardis the church serving the people of that area. Some people from Vermont also attend church at Adams and Antioch, using the burial grounds of all three churches. Alpine is well-named for it is "straight up" five miles of high hills. One is pleasantly surprised, after riding for miles without seeing a house, to come upon the up-to-date Jones farm. The proprietor is sometimes referred to as "Peach" Jones because he was one of the first men in Chilton County to raise peaches for market.

The Negro neighborhoods which are a part of the Maplesville natural community think of Maplesville chiefly as a shopping center. The seventy-five families living in Maplesville have good leaders, active organizations and some services such as a cafeteria managed by Negroes. They are busy working up plans for a school building so their children will not have to attend school in the Baptist church. The Negroes from the village work in the sawmills, on the railroads as well as on the surrounding farms. The other Negro neighborhoods around Maplesville are farm neighborhoods, most of the families being tenants. New Convert, with forty-one families, has five active organizations and a public school of junior-high rank as well as a private Lutheran school. The farmers here are progressive and appreciate the help rendered by the farm agents. Pleasant Hill, another neighborhood, was visited by a tornado in 1932 which destroyed 18 of its 19 Negro homes. All of these neighborhoods say they go to Maplesville to trade because it is nearer. Another obvious explanation is the fact that landlords there are in position to extend credit to those that are tenants on the plantations.

In conclusion, the following facts about the Maplesville Natural Community are significant:

1. Maplesville attracts eight white and three Negro neighborhoods. The larger community numbers about 1700 people, including the 400 in the village proper.
2. Three of the white neighborhoods are artificially split by county lines.
3. The local school and nearness are the most common reasons why the neighborhoods feel attached to Maplesville.

THORSBY

THE VILLAGE*

There are two or three ways one could begin a community description of Thorsby. One way would be to hark back to 1896, the date the settlement was founded by a group of Scandinavian farmers enticed to Alabama from the middle west by enthusiastic L. & N. railroad agents.



These pioneers formed a land company, began tilling individual farms with their own hands, and practiced diversified farming in the one-crop South. There were disappointing days when they realized that the soil was not up to their expectations; but being stout of heart they sought for some way to make their farms pay. They began to grow grapes, prospered, built two wineries. Along came State prohibition in 1908 and drove the wineries out of existence and with them

went a number of the original settlers.

Or one could begin an account of Thorsby by stating the claim made by the town clerk: "Thorsby is the biggest little town in the State." Well does one realize this in visiting the mayor who lives a mile and a half from the village in as rural a setting as one could picture. Yet he is still in the city limits of the 1901 incorporation. "Why," we asked, "does Thorsby, numbering less than one thousand inhabitants, cover as much space on a map as does Clanton, the county seat?" The explanation proved simple but carried us back again to those founding fathers who were so intent on having enough land for school taxes that they embraced many farms in their city limits. The result was that the first nine-months high school to be established between Birmingham and Montgomery was at Thorsby, so the citizens claim. Even their elementary school held classes nine months each year until the county took it over. Out of this high school grew Thorsby Institute, a secondary school of strictest academic and disciplinary standards, of which Thorsby people are very proud. This also gave rise to the saying still current in the village: "Thorsby is a church and a school town." The churches do their part. The Norwegian Lutherans sold their building to the active Congregationalists; the Baptists are strong, though with the disappearance of the Swedes, the Swedish Lutheran Church is passing out of the picture. The town clerk estimated that only five percent of the population is now descended from Scandinavian stock. In spite of this, many people even in Chilton County speak of Thorsby as being a settlement of foreigners. Perhaps what is foreign is the manner of life in Thorsby, which brings us to another way in which this account could have begun.

*See footnote, page 25.

Community life in the village is cooperative. Here again the passing Scandinavian element in the population left its influence. In 1903 the Thorsby Fruit and Truck Growers Association, the first cooperative association in this part of Alabama (some claim in the whole of Alabama), was chartered and began its active career of marketing the strawberries and peaches which supplanted the grapes fallen into disrepute. Fruit-growing brought better days to Thorsby as well as twenty small attractive roadside stands which tempt passing motorists to buy the excellent fruit offered for sale. Cooperation became a



community habit, a folkway, so that individuals banded together in organizations to accomplish set purposes, and these organizations worked together for the common good. Thorsby has a definite community consciousness now as is shown by the well-attended annual Fourth of July barbecue as well as by the oft-expressed desire for a community house. Community leaders who were asked to name important community needs named "community house" twice as often as anything else. The Town Council bought a small park some years ago; the Community Club is now trying to equip it for recreational purposes. Organizational cooperation is strikingly shown in that the Lions' Club, the Lutheran Ladies Aid, the Eastern Star, and the Parent-Teachers Association provide the underprivileged children of the community with better food and clothing. The older boys stay with the Boy Scout Troop until late teens instead of losing interest; there is a baseball club, and a Recreational Club which combines physical exercise with intellectual pursuits. The women of the community enter whole-heartedly into the work of their Home Demonstration Club, Garden Club, the Eastern Star, the Lutheran Ladies Aid, the Congregational Ladies Guild and the Woman's Missionary Union. Cooperation among the churches takes place through monthly union prayer meetings, union Thanksgiving services and a jointly-sponsored Vacation Church School in the summer.

The lay of the land around Thorsby is like the people there—devoid of frills. The Thorsby Institute grounds extend up from the railroad tracks and highway, which divide the town, to two well-planned buildings set on a hill among pines. This school and the large water-tower nearby are the principal landmarks. On another rise across town the Elementary and Junior High School keeps to its cramped quarters. There are two rows of stores, one fronting the railroad and the other the more recently built highway.

The prosperity of the local citizenry is shown by the well-kept businesses which the people support with some help from tourists and farm-

ers. There are eleven stores, a bank, three garages, three filling stations, two barber shops, a blacksmith shop, two restaurants and a shoe repair shop. The local doctor is in much demand over a large area. Successful florists in Thorsby have built up such a trade that many people go to Thorsby just to buy flowers. Two new stores, one a ten-cent store and the other a hardware transferring from Maplesville, are moving to Thorsby. When asked why he was moving, the hardware man said: "I'm going to Thorsby for there's money there."

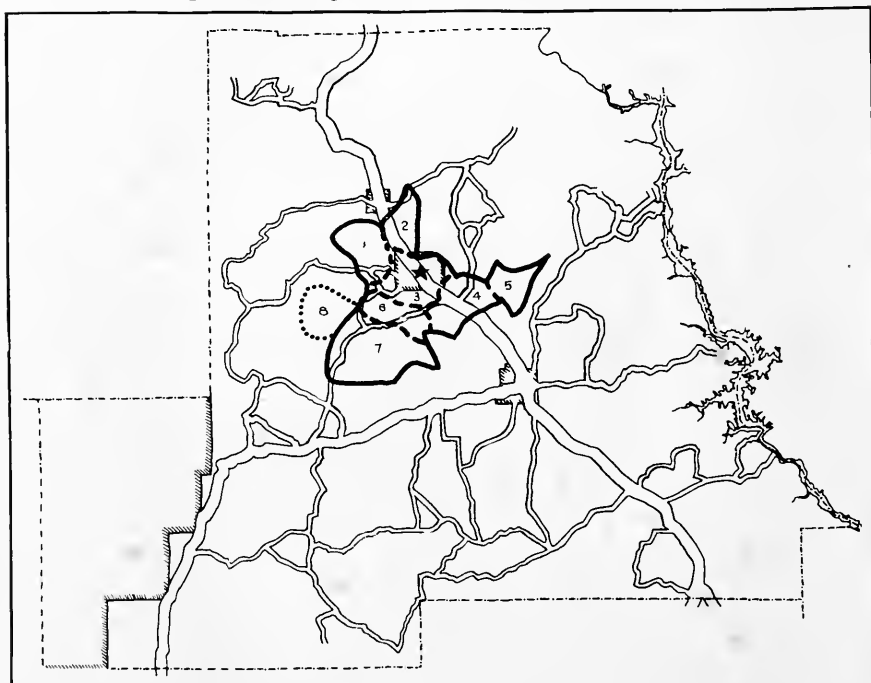
Thorsby, as every community does, attracts to itself the type of people fitted to its life. Over a period of years it has appealed to those recognizing the value of cooperation, civic responsibility, and hard work. Only ten of the one hundred and fifty local families have domestic help. Negroes are scarce because people do their own work, with the exception of the washing done weekly by members of the neighboring Negro community. There is not a single vacant house in Thorsby. One person who recently moved in said that he came so his children could have the educational advantages of Thorsby. He told of one other family looking for a home. A sewage system is being installed with government help. Protests against it were few in spite of the great expense falling upon many people in the sparsely settled parts of the town.



But life in the village has its ups and downs. The cooperative organization which had such a great part in Thorsby's past life is now facing critical days. Farmers now have their own trucks, they want the excuse of a trip to Birmingham, and they show less loyalty to this economic organization. Some of the older people are openly critical of the younger generation, which in turn is asking: "How can we make a living in Thorsby?" Some Thorsby residents feel that their neighbors are so busy at home or at work that they have no time for educational growth. A sign of this feeling was the short-lived Ladies Culture Club, which failed because of insufficient interest. People will work hard in organizations which contribute to church and community life but apparently lose interest in those seeking to cultivate the individual. "They have time to work for others, but they do not have time to waste on themselves." There is no leisure class which makes the development of the aesthetic a personal concern of theirs.

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY

"There is a ring of churches around Thorsby which keeps us from reaching the people in the rural areas," was a comment made by a Thorsby leader, which was well-borne out by the neighborhood questionnaires. Every one of the six white neighborhoods which felt closely attached to Thorsby was centered around an active church. In Pate's Chapel the people are "loyal to their church and community and the Missionary Society and Sunbeams are doing good work." The nine families in Robinson Springs support their church, the only organization in the neighborhood, in spite of the great sacrifice involved. Cedar Grove has a



MAP 9

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY OF THORSBY

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pate's Chapel | 4. New Salem | 7. Mt. Carmel |
| 2. Maynard Chapel | 5. Robinson Springs | 8. Beulah (Negro) |
| 3. Thorsby | 6. Cedar Grove | |

Church with a Christian Endeavor Society. Mt. Carmel's Church has a Woman's Missionary Union and a B. Y. P. U. In Maynard Chapel the church is likewise the community center with a young people's organization and a Sunday School. The Woman's Missionary Society has not been organized for the women think it would prove to be an organization to which they would have to contribute out of their small incomes. New

Salem not only has a church but is one of the few neighborhoods in the county with a woman's "social club." This meets monthly at the church and is greatly enjoyed by the women.

A glance at the map shows that Thorsby is the center of the smallest natural community although it ranks second to Clanton in population. In other words, size alone does not attract. The 168 families in the neighborhoods attached to Thorsby are served by only 16 services in those neighborhoods. This means that economically they are very dependent upon the outside world. However, because of its location Thorsby has to share this trade with Jemison just to the north and Clanton, just to the south. Maplesville with only half the population of Thorsby supports 47 services to Thorsby's 31. But Maplesville is farther from Clanton.

The two Negro communities which feel a part of the Thorsby community are Beulah, 23 families, and Union, 16 families. Each has an elementary school and a church. Farming is the chief occupation of the people, although a sawmill in Beulah provides other employment for some.

The Thorsby community consists of a very cooperative group of village people who are progressive and eager to improve the economic as well as the social life of Thorsby. The leaders recognize that they must have the help of the farmers in their efforts; to that end, they have promoted the establishment of a milk depot. The people outside of Thorsby, however, feel little need for the social life provided by the village. Their church groups hold them together and restrict their loyalties to their respective neighborhoods. This means that the chief ties existing between the village center and the neighborhoods are economic in nature.

VERBENA

THE VILLAGE*

Beautifully located on rolling hills sloping down to shining clear Chestnut Creek, Verbena comfortably blends a traditional way of life with the demands of the present to create a charming atmosphere peculiar to itself alone. Proud of their past and viewing the future with little alarm the four hundred residents are always ready to rally to the defense of Verbena's good name.

Between the Birmingham-Montgomery highway, which runs near the town, and the railroad there are four general stores, four filling stations, a cafe, a barber shop, and a garage; in addition, a cotton gin, a grist mill, a shoe repair shop are scattered through the village.

The sandy streets follow the slope of the land past once pretentious homes and simple, neat bungalows. There is no uniform architecture. The Methodist and Baptist churches are in good repair. The stone high school with its lovely view over the valley so completely overshadowed the barn-like elementary school rented from the Masons that finally a new school is being built.

Four economic events have shaped the business life of Verbena. First, the coming of the railroad in 1870 brought the original commis-



sary around which the village grew. It also made it possible for Verbena to prosper as a summer resort in the days when people fled from the scourge of yellow fever then prevalent around Montgomery. The old hotel that catered to this seasonal trade was a well-known landmark until it burned in the early Twenties.

Not long after the coming of the railroad a sawmill company moved in with two hundred employees. By 1895 they cut off the timber and the land was sold as farm tracts. The departure of this mill and its payroll proved a real economic crisis through which the village passed with difficulty, although many residents were glad to see the sawmill employees go.

The third event was the construction of Mitchell Dam six miles to the east by the Alabama Power Company. Verbena was the nearest railroad connection and business center and therefore enjoyed a considerable boom period during which dilapidated buildings were renovated, residences and farm lands were advertised for rent and sale, and a spirit of optimism generally prevailed. When the dam was completed, the workers moved elsewhere and Verbena business men turned their attention to the matter of having the through highway routed by Verbena. In this,

*See footnote, page 25.

the fourth of the economic events, they were successful, but at the time only one or two of the merchants realized how the highway would draw Verbena trade to larger centers.

A great source of pride to Verbena residents is their imported Black Belt heritage. When Clanton put up a sign "Drive Careful" it would be a Verbena resident who, by letters to the papers throughout the state, corrected the adverb. The early landowners of Verbena were well-educated and kept up their social connections in Montgomery. They founded Verbena Academy, the predecessor of the present high school which Verbena people claim was the first consolidated school in the county. The descendants of these first settlers now own most of the land around Verbena. Throughout Chilton County people attribute the stability of Verbena's life to the fact that its landowners will not sell their land because they want to see Verbena kept as it is. However, these Verbena landowners are quick to reply: "There is plenty of land for sale if one will pay a reasonable price. Only one man is unwilling to sell." This one man, by far the largest landowner, readily says: "Of course, I won't sell. I don't want any convict camps or broom factories in Verbena."¹

Preservation of traditions therefore parallels the ownership of land by those born into these traditions. Those who have connections elsewhere and are financially able go outside the village for their cultural and recreational life; those who have to remain at home feel that more should be done locally to organize lecture courses and recreational groups, but are not in position to make a success of such ventures without the help of the more influential group.

Land owners and tenants alike are loyal to Verbena if they have resided there for any length of time. One housewife, living in a rented house, told of the Homecoming Day held under the auspices of the Parent-Teachers' Association at the high school last year, emphasizing how glad people were to return. She added, "We have a little saying, 'If once you've dipped your foot in Chestnut Creek you always want to return'." Further indication of the satisfaction people feel with Verbena is shown by the following remarks of a woman who moved in from Birmingham. "I love Verbena. This is the only place I've ever lived in where I want to spend the rest of my life and be buried."

The people of Verbena feel apologetic for living in a county which often votes Republican, though in the heart of the deep South. They are quick to assure one, however, that their beat, consisting of 400 votes, is always strongly Democratic. Furthermore, the friction so apparent at election time in other communities of the county does not exist at Verbena. So complete is the mutual trust that the representatives of one party at the polls do not hesitate to leave the rival party in charge of the balloting in case they have to go to lunch or to visit a nearby store. The village is unincorporated, so there are no local officials to be elected.

¹ He was actually asked to sell or rent land for these purposes.

Verbena people are proud that their village is law abiding. Anyone bent on mischief is made to feel unwelcome. "We don't do anything particular to undesirable newcomers—just freeze them out," said one of the leading business men. If newcomers want to be accepted into the community they must go to church where contacts made will lead to social calls and some degree of approval. But assimilation into the community is a slow process and there is often much loneliness until the sense of belonging is recognized. "If people don't measure up, then they move



on." A testimony to the honesty of the villagers is the practice of one merchant of leaving his ploughs and other farm implements on display out on his open store porch all night. He has never lost a thing.

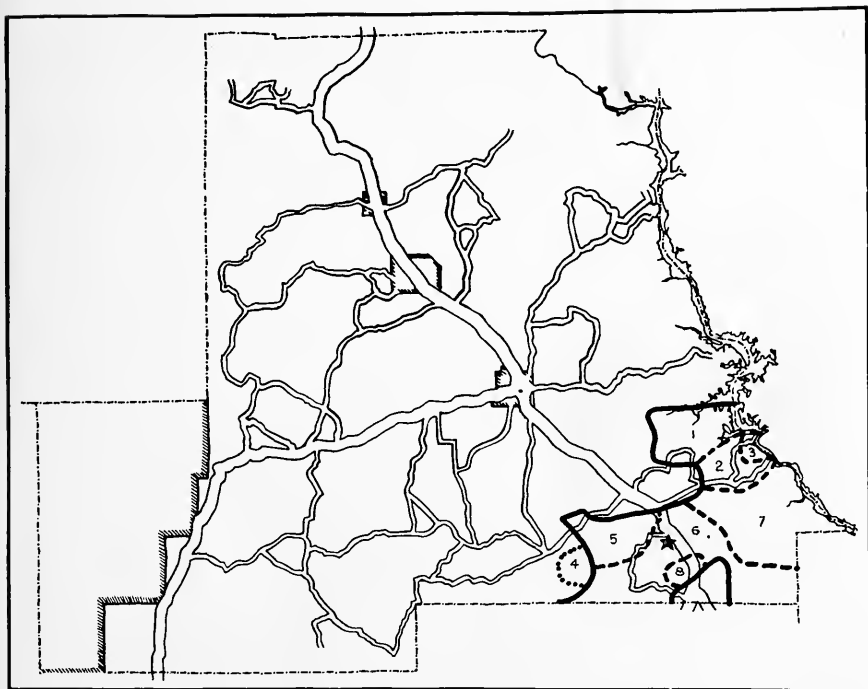
Recreational activities center around the school athletic teams: baseball, football and basket ball, and a community baseball team which plays during the summer. Chestnut Creek has three popular swimming holes. Young people have no other orga-

nized recreation, though a prominent landowner has made an empty store building available to them for roller-skating. On either side of Verbena is a honky-tonk which some of the young people frequent, much to the dismay of many older residents. "There's more drinking than there ought to be," said a young man, "but if we had something to do here in town things would be much better." Boys and girls often go to Clanton to see a movie or else just go riding. The young people's societies of the churches provide social gatherings for those interested.

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY

The village of Verbena forms the natural center for those living in the five white neighborhoods of Midway (2 miles), Floyd (2 miles), Shady Grove (4 miles), Corinth (5 miles), and Mitchell Dam (6 miles). Mitchell Dam differs most from the rest in that it is a controlled community, located as it is in the grounds of the Alabama Power Company. It has a recreation hall, guest house and club house. Most of the people in the "camp" go to church at Verbena and send their children there to school. However, they trade mainly in Clanton. Corinth with an estimated thirty-three families has quite a variety of organizations: Sunday School, Woman's Missionary Union, Wildlife Conservation Club, Fire Prevention Club, and Clodhopper Funster Club. One resident of Corinth in describing the friendliness of the people there said that after his house burned with all he had the people got together and built a house for him and even gave him more than he had before the fire.

The reasons given by those interviewed for their neighborhood's feeling of attachment to Verbena are: to trade—5; schools—5; doctor—4; mails—2; other reasons being mentioned only once.



MAP 10

THE NATURAL COMMUNITY OF VERBENA

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 1. Big Spring (Negro) | 4. Lily Hill (Negro) | 7. Corinth |
| 2. Shady Grove | 5. Floyd | 8. Midway |
| 3. Mitchell Dam | 6. Verbena | |

The Negro-white relationship in the Verbena community is well characterized by a Negro farmer in the Lily Hill neighborhood, who said: "We were set up here and at Cross Roads and Mountain Creek by the white people in the days of slavery and they have always been nice to us. We get along fine. They take care of us and we take care of them." In Cross Roads the Negroes said that their relationship with the old white settlers was very good but that they felt distant toward newcomers of the white race. "We don't have anything to do with the newcomers if they are white. They usually move after they have been here for a year anyway."

The Negro neighborhoods around Verbena show signs of social stratification which are not so pronounced in many other Negro settlements. This is in keeping with the aristocratic tradition governing the life of the white people in the village center.

In conclusion: There are those in the Verbena community whose roots go down deep; they own the land, control the business and take a kindly interest in the welfare of those, both white and colored, for whom they feel the slightest responsibility. It is a remnant of the Old South, of storied fame, still alive.

LEADERSHIP IN THE CENTERS OF EACH COMMUNITY

The studies made of the village centers of the county reveal some interesting facts about the leadership there.¹

Who Are the Leaders? Without a doubt, the business men take the lead. They are the most-often named² in every place except Jemison, where they are surpassed by the doctors. But the business men of Jemison, as we saw in our previous description, do not want to be leaders of the village. Teachers are the only other people named in every center. On the other hand, ministers are listed as leaders in only one place.



Housewives are named in all the communities but Verbena. Farmers are rarely named, showing that the people in the villages seldom think of the hinterland as a part of the "community." Only in Verbena is there mention of a landowner (apart

from land-owning business men). In Clanton, the county seat, those in politically controlled jobs rank second to the business men.

Are the Leaders Men or Women? In Clanton, a woman has only a 15 to 1 chance of being among the most-often-named; in Verbena a 7 to 1 chance; in Jemison a 4 to 1 chance; in Maplesville a 3 to 1 chance and in Thorsby a 2 to 1 chance.

How Old Are the Leaders? A person under forty stands very little chance of being named a leader in the villages of Chilton County; a person under fifty has a slightly better chance. The median age and mean age respectively in Jemison are 48 and 50; in Maplesville 49 and 51; in Verbena 57 and 53; in Clanton 56 and 56; in Thorsby 58 and 57. To put the matter another way, in Jemison and Maplesville 50 percent of the leaders are over 50, in Clanton 63 percent, in Verbena 75 percent and in Thorsby 78 percent.

1. Unfortunately one of the many points of investigation which we had to omit, due to lack of time and money, was that of leadership in the open-country neighborhoods. The discussion here, therefore, deals with the village centers.

2. No totals will be used here because of the unequal sizes of various centers. Clanton, for instance, would have undue influence. The leaders described here have been named most often in each village—3 times in smaller, 5 times in larger places. This, of course, is on the basis of personal interviews relative to leadership; not on the basis of any popular balloting.

Do These Leaders Own Their Homes? Decidedly so. All leaders in Jemison and Verbena are home-owners. One leader each in Thorsby and Maplesville rents, the rest owning or having the house furnished in connection with a school or church. In Clanton seven-eighths own. Compare these with the extent of home ownership estimated for each center in turn: Verbena 47 percent; Jemison 55 percent; Thorsby 65 percent; Maplesville 66 percent; Clanton 75 percent.

What Formal Education Have the Leaders Had?

	Highest level reached	
	High School (Percent)	College (Percent)
Maplesville	88	63
Thorsby	88	50
Jemison	70	70
Clanton	75	38
Verbena	38	50

These figures, of course, do not reflect the educational attainment of all people in the centers named. They do show that in all places except Clanton a leader will more than likely have been to college.

How Long Have the Leaders Lived in the Center? In Jemison and Thorsby not a single leader has lived there all his life. In Jemison one-half have been there less than five years; in Thorsby one leader has been there less than half a year, though two-thirds of the leaders have been there eighteen years or more. In Maplesville and Clanton two-fifths have lived there all their lives, the shortest period of residence being five years and four years for the respective places. Verbena has as its leaders chiefly native sons, the two exceptions being persons who have been there for more than 16 years. These figures shed much light on the ability of the various centers to assimilate newcomers.

Why Were These People Selected as Leaders? So many varied reasons for naming people as leaders were given by those being interviewed that we had to group all reasons under three chief heads—positional, personal, and organizational or civic. The term *positional* includes reasons arising out of a person's professional or political position, or from being a member of an old family or having rich connections, or being an old resident. The term *personal* includes a number of individual qualities which the informants think responsible for the person's leadership: character, progressive, conservative, successful, charitable, born leader, substantial citizen, a good father, business



ability, cooperative, friendly, capable, initiative, and in one case "one hundred per cent white man." The term *organizational* or *civic* describes that leadership arising from being an officer of an organization or being active in school, church or civic work. It represents activity rather than personal qualities, though the two are really inseparable. The importance here, however, is to see which communities emphasize the personal qualities and which the activity element of leadership. The following table shows, in percentages, the distribution of reasons given for naming people as leaders:

	Organizational			
	Positional	Personal	or Civic	Total
Clanton	32	41	27	100
Jemison	8	60	32	100
Maplesville	23	54	23	100
Thorsby	11	39	50	100
Verbena	6	56	38	100
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average	16	50	34	100

Obviously, the "positional" is most prized in Clanton, the growing business town, and is most taken for granted in aristocratic Verbena. The "personal" is most prized in conservative Jemison, Verbena and individualistic Maplesville; least in Thorsby. The "organizational or civic" viewpoint is valued most highly in cooperative Thorsby, least in Maplesville. In the centers, taken as a whole, the "personal" equals in importance the other two combined.

SUMMARY FACTS ABOUT THE NATURAL COMMUNITIES

	CLANTON	JEMISON	MAPLESVILLE	THORSBY	VERBENA
CENTER: Population (Estimate)	4000	500	400	900	400
Services Provided	105	49	47	31	17
Dominant Tradition	Business: Progressive	Business: Conservative	Individual- istic	Cooperative	Aristocratic
Leadership: Most Valued:	Personal	Personal	Personal	Organiza- tional	Personal
Next Most Valued:	Positional	Organiza- tional	Tie: Personal and Organi- zational	Personal	Organiza- tional
NATURAL COMMUNITY: Neighborhoods:					
White	44	14	8	6	5
Negro (Not Counting Center)	4	3	2	2	4
Families not in Center	1877	502	366	207	190
Services not in Center	203	83	51	22	44
Reason for attach- ment to Center:					
First	To trade	School	School	Scattered	Trade and School
Second	Nearness	Nearness & Doctor	Nearness	Scattered	Trade and School
Third	Doctor	Doctor	Doctor	Scattered	Doctor

1. Except for Clanton, by far the largest population center, the size of the village had no direct relationship to the number of neighborhoods attracted. Thorsby, second in size, was fifth in neighborhoods claimed. (Geographical location was partly responsible.) There was a direct relationship, however, between neighborhoods attracted and services offered, since those with most services attracted most neighborhoods in order.

2. The village centers differ markedly in dominant traditions. These are reflected in most cases in the farm-village relationships as well as in the qualities valued in leaders.

3. There seems little relationship between the organizational pattern of the village center and the larger community, unless it be that the most

closely organized communities have less drawing power. The P.-T. A. seemed to be the one organization that was supported by village and rural people alike, though it usually was controlled by village people.

4. Reasons for neighborhood attachments to village centers were:

To trade—35 mentions

Nearness—32 mentions

Schools—32 mentions

Doctor—26 mentions

Use all services—15 mentions

County seat—11 mentions

Dentist—8 mentions

Mails—7 mentions

The importance of the doctor is apparent.

5. The neighborhoods of Stanton and Cooper are almost as large as Verbena and have only two or three fewer services. The reason Verbena was selected as a center and the other two were not is due to the fact that Verbena once had a great many more services which at one time included a bank. These former services had much to do with establishing community bonds and have to be taken into account.

6. Isabella is an interesting neighborhood centered about a large consolidated high school. It has little to offer in the way of trade or professional services but the intense loyalty of the people to their neighborhood exerted sufficient pressure to bring about the location of the school in their midst.

NOTES ON SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE COUNTY

THE CHURCH

The church, as we saw in an earlier discussion of the neighborhood, is the agency or institution most frequently found in the rural areas. Sixty-two of the seventy-six white neighborhoods have churches, but only thirty-three have schools.¹ Not only does the church perform its religious functions but it is the channel for social participation as well. A survey made last year by the principal of the Verbena High School showed that in the area served by that school 84 percent of the children went to Sunday School twice a month; 58 percent of these attended every Sunday. Since a number of the smaller churches have services only once a month it was not surprising to find that 43 percent of the people go to "preaching" only once a month. In addition to these, 20 percent go weekly and 29 percent twice a month—chiefly to the Verbena churches. None of the children included in the sample of about 100 questionnaires said that they never went to church.

The importance of the young people's societies, especially the B. Y. P. U. in this prevailingly Baptist region, was brought out by a question we asked of the 1200 school children filling out our questionnaire on buying habits. For the purpose of getting relative rather than exact data we asked them to list what meetings members of their families attended and how often they went. The B. Y. P. U. was shown to be the basis of the greatest number of social contacts since it was mentioned most often and meets weekly. The Woman's Missionary Union, in some places meeting monthly and in others semi-monthly, affords relatively more contacts than any other exclusively woman's group. These church organizations demonstrate the importance of the church as a focal point of social organization in Chilton County, although the organizations tend to become of less relative importance as the size of the place in-



creases. Clanton, for example, is full of competing organizations which tend to minimize the part played by the church groups. Revivals and tent meetings are much appreciated in the neighborhoods and usually draw large crowds from a wide area. The number of children who failed to report any attendance at meetings on the part of their families was very large and indicates that there is a significantly large proportion of families in Chilton County unaffiliated with a formal group.²

1. Negro organizations are discussed in connection with the Negro neighborhoods. See page 23.
2. Although we could have worked out an actual proportion here, which in all probability would have been reliable, it seemed best to present the data in relative terms alone.

THE SCHOOL

The Parent-Teachers' Association was mentioned next after the church organizations by the school children. What is more important than the fact that the numerous P.-T. A. groups are fairly well-attended is the fact that this organization tends to draw parents from the more isolated neighborhoods in to the places where the consolidated schools are located. Stanton and Isabella are good illustrations of this tendency.

As would be expected, the 4-H Clubs polled large in attendance since the school children have their meetings at the school house where

they are already gathered. The F. F. A. and the F. H. A. were frequently mentioned but not to the extent that the 4-H Clubs were.



Farm and Home Organizations: The Home Demonstration Clubs were more popular among the women than the farm organizations among the men, but even these Home Demonstration Clubs reach comparatively few women of the county if we can use the school questionnaires as a basis for judgment. Of course, the men

attend quite a few meetings to hear of the government's agricultural program but this is to get information and is not active participation on the part of members in an organization.

Social and Fraternal Organizations: Those wishing to belong to social and fraternal organizations usually go to one of the village centers for this association. There are very few organized groups of this nature in the open country. Indications are that only a very small minority of the people join organizations of this type. The same applies to the patriotic and civic organizations.

Conclusion: The large majority of the people of the county are connected with some church and support church organizations to a greater degree than any other type. School organizations come next in importance, taking precedence over those dealing with the farm and home. This can be explained in large measure by the presence of more leaders professionally charged with maintaining church and even school groups. Professional leadership provided for farm and home organizations is limited to two or three extension workers who have to cover the whole county. Social and fraternal, patriotic and civic groups are usually found in the village centers, but even here they do not reach the majority of the population due to the fact that the organizational pattern (especially for organizations of this sort) is a folkway of the higher income group where interlocking memberships reduce the total number of different people affiliated to a figure considerably below the membership total for all such organizations.

PART THREE

WHY NOT LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COMMUNITIES OF YOUR COUNTY?

It has been said that a man's world begins with himself and extends outward to include his family, his neighborhood, his community, his county. The central point of interest in this study has been the neighborhood and the community. Each one has its own individuality—each is distinctly different from the other.

If you are just interested in living in the neighborhood and community, have you ever thought about why people are like they are in your community and why they differ from the people in another community? Did you ever ask yourself the questions: "When I go to the county seat, people look alike to me—in my own community they seem different. Why?"

Now, let's look at your community? Which of the communities previously described is it most like? Or is it totally unlike all of them? How large an area does it cover? Are all sections of your community represented in whatever plans are being worked out for your community?

If you are interested in planning or program development work, how well do you actually know the communities of your county? Is your information based on guess-work or on a systematic study? Are you having difficulty getting programs across? Have you ever thought about why people will respond to your program in one community and show no interest in it in another? Have you ever thought about why people in group meetings look alike but think and respond differently? Have you ever thought that these difficulties may arise out of trying to group together people who do not feel that they belong together?

If you are a county superintendent of schools what effect are your consolidated schools having upon the community life of the people? If you are connected with government extension work where are the best places to hold meetings, demonstrations and lectures in order to draw together people who are acquainted with one another? If you are a farmer, housewife, or businessman and interested in community programs, how can you best get others interested so as to develop community activities? What social forces are at work in certain disorganized communities? To answer such a question welfare workers will first want to know the boundaries of the natural communities.

It is easy to raise questions. There is so much that we do not know and can never hope to know. Community and county leaders are usually very busy people and can well question the usefulness of any added task such as the mapping of a county's natural communities. However,

the experience of those who have taken the time to do this mapping has been an enthusiastic testimony to its usefulness. One minister who surveyed the communities and neighborhoods surrounding his five country churches said: "I wouldn't take anything for this experience. It has taught me so much that I didn't know before." A school supervisor said much the same thing. A county agent who accompanied field workers making such a survey remarked: "I've learned more about my county in one week with you fellows than I could have learned in two years puttering around on my own."

To learn more about the communities makes it possible to work more effectively through and with groups. For the community to learn more about itself makes it a stronger and more effective working and planning group.

If the method to be proposed were involved or laborious it could hardly expect to claim the serious attention of busy people. It has been streamlined in order to serve a purpose rather than to be academically impressive, though it is based on scientific experimentation and subjected to check and re-check. As has been pointed out in previous discussion, the basis of the method is to find out what neighborhoods of the county cluster around the chief centers, and to consider each cluster as a natural community. This is the "neighborhood cluster" method.

THE METHOD:

Step I—Selection of people to help in the survey.

1. Make the project cooperative. Get the help of schools, churches, civic clubs, county agencies.
2. Select as a staff those people who can keep confidential information to themselves, who like people, who have inquiring minds and a democratic manner, and who value accuracy.
3. Representation of cooperating organizations and agencies on staff will depend upon the local situation.

Step II—Procuring materials for the survey.

1. The State Highway Commission maps usually serve the purpose very well.

*2. The questionnaires must be made out, tried on several people and then revised. They can then be mimeographed in the quantity needed.

3. Keep expenses to the minimum. Decide who will underwrite the total cost based on the following expenditures:

- a. Highway maps. One for each "team" and perhaps six for use in mapping the results of the field work.

* Questionnaires for studying neighborhoods, schools, churches, organizations, and general community structure can be secured, upon request, from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C.

- b. Questionnaires. The number to be mimeographed will depend upon the size of county and the extent of sample to be taken.
- c. Field work. Time of workers if they are paid, as well as the cost of transportation.
- d. Tabulation of results and final mapping.
- e. Publication of findings. Can consist of simple mapping and mimeographing; or more elaborate bulletin.

Step III—Preparation for field work.

1. Much time can be saved by getting the county agent, school bus drivers, older farm boys and girls in the consolidated school, merchants who know the farmers and others well-informed regarding the county to trace off lightly in pencil the boundaries of all the neighborhoods with which they are familiar. The names of these neighborhoods should be written within the area traced.

2. At the same time the names of the leading people in each neighborhood should be noted. They will be the first interviewed.

3. A division of labor should be agreed upon by those helping with the survey. Less experienced people prefer to work in pairs or "teams". Each team should be assigned a section of the county for mapping. It would probably prevent biased answers if those doing the interviewing were unacquainted with those being interviewed. The preliminary areas should be sketched on the map each team takes out. (See point 1 above.)

4. While the rural areas are being mapped, a study should be made of the leadership, organizational pattern, stratification, cooperation and conflict in the village centers.

5. The staff should have a meeting before starting the field work. This meeting should answer the following questions:

- a. If the people ask us what this survey is for, what shall we answer? (Play fair with people being interviewed; you are asking them questions; they have a right to ask you questions.)
- b. What job am I to do? (Assignments should be specific.)
- c. How am I to do it? (Demonstration interview can be staged at the meeting, a discussion of the points to be taken up in Step IV is quite necessary.)
- d. What does this question in the questionnaire mean? (The questions should be discussed so that they mean the same thing to everybody.)

Step IV—The Field Work for Mapping Neighborhoods

1. Every interview should result in added information about neighborhood boundaries and in the filling out of the neighborhood questionnaire.

2. Upon arriving in the section of the county assigned to them, the "team" should try to get in touch with some neighborhood leader whose name was obtained before starting out. Not having such a name, a visit at a general store, or a farm house, or at a school will provide satisfactory interviews.

3. In the rural areas most people refer to their neighborhood as a "community." Therefore, an interview might well begin by asking: "What community is this?" to be followed with "Can you show me on the map here just how far this community goes in each direction?" Changes will probably have to be made in the preliminary area made before starting out. (See III, 1.)

4. Three or four interviews in a neighborhood of thirty or forty families are apt to show that the people are in agreement about area, number of families, organization and the like. If there is disagreement, as there might well be in a very populous neighborhood or in one where tenancy is very high with a shifting population, the most satisfactory procedure would be to "work" the neighborhoods around this uncertain one and arrive at its boundaries by a process of elimination.

5. If there is some doubt in the mind of the person interviewed as to his neighborhood's affiliation with a larger center on the grounds that the people go to two centers, ask the following question: "In case a meeting in which you were interested was held the same night at both centers, to which center would the people be most likely to go? That is, assuming that the meetings were similar in nature."

6. After visiting all the neighborhoods and deciding about disputed areas by further questioning in those areas the neighborhood map can be prepared for the section visited by that team. Then, the information from the questionnaires obtained for each neighborhood can be combined into one master tabulation for that neighborhood. In addition, the team should make notes of significant features of the life in each neighborhood on the back of this master tabulation.

7. Different teams whose sections join will have to discuss those neighborhoods which overlapped their sections and decide which boundaries are most accurate.

Step V—Analysis of Village Center

1. Not only should one understand the characteristics of the open-country neighborhoods; the social life of the village center should be studied as well.

2. The data for such an analysis can be obtained through personal interviews based on the questionnaires available, upon request, from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C.

3. Those making the village investigation should get together frequently to discuss their findings in regard to the points raised on the

questionnaire. If there is disagreement as to any of the points, further interviews should be held in order to get to the bottom of the situation.

4. The advisability or inadvisability of having local people conduct these interviews will depend upon the community as well as upon the personality of the individuals available. This is a matter which should be given serious consideration, however.

Step VI—Final Mapping and Tabulation

1. When the field work is finished maps should be prepared to show:
 - a. All of the neighborhoods of the county.
 - b. All of the natural communities of the county by clustering neighborhoods attached to a common center.
 - c. Maps of each individual community for use by people working with that community alone.

2. The answers to the questionnaires can be tabulated one by one. From the tables prepared certain generalizations can be drawn regarding the points taken up by the questionnaire.

Step VII—Planning for the Natural Community

1. The uses to which the data obtained are put will depend to great degree upon the purpose of the survey. Open forums to discuss the findings are often very helpful; sometimes, they do more harm than good with faulty leadership.

2. On the basis of neighborhoods discovered, a system of representation can be worked out so that all parts of the community feel that their wishes are made known.

3. Similarly in county planning representation on the basis of the natural communities of the county seems logical.

Further remarks about method:

1. Segregated racial groups should be studied as separate neighborhoods. These neighborhoods should be mapped separately and, if possible, be included in the area covered by the natural community. This is not always easy to do in case the white people of one area and the other racial group differ in their attachments to larger centers.

2. It will often happen that neighborhoods near the county lines will feel affiliated with a larger center in another county. On the contrary, parts of neighborhoods lying in other counties may be attracted to a center in the county you are studying.

3. Once in a while a neighborhood will be separated from the larger center to which it feels attached by a neighborhood or two feeling an attachment to a different place. This is certainly the exception rather than the rule.



APPENDIX



THE POPULATION OF CHILTON COUNTY

1. The population of Chilton County increased only six percent in the twenty year period 1910-1930, and this growth was not regular. During the decade 1910-1920, the county population decreased 2 percent and in the following decade it advanced 8 percent. In the period 1920-30, 7 of the 16 election precincts in the county lost population. Most of the gain for the county, which was 1,809 persons, was experienced by Clanton precinct including a town by the same name. This precinct gained 1,241 persons or 69 percent of the total gain for the county, although Clanton precinct's share of the total county population in 1930 was only 26 per cent.

2. It is estimated that the migration from the county between 1920 and 1930 was 2,848 persons or 13 percent of the 1920 county population, due to the excess of births over deaths. If there had been no out-migration the county population would have advanced 4,657 persons or 20 percent.

In the period 1930-1935 the county farm population increased only 316 persons or 2 percent according to the census. But the estimated natural increase was 1,835 persons or 10 percent and the in-migration from non-farm areas amounted to 1,328 persons or 7 percent. Hence, if there had been no out-migration the county farm population would have risen by 3,163 persons or 17 percent. Since the census increase was only 316 persons the estimated net out-migration amounted to 2,847 persons or 15 percent of the 1930 farm population.

3. The demographic characteristics of the county population differ markedly from those of the Nation.

The median age for the total population was only 20.0 years as compared to 26.4 for the United States total and 21.6 for the United States rural farm. There was an excess of people in the younger ages and a deficiency in the older, when compared with the United States population.

4. Nationality was not of great social significance to the County population since less than one percent of the total were of foreign white stock compared to the State's 2 percent. Of the 190 white persons of foreign origin, 32 percent were of Swedish, 14 of Norwegian and 10 percent of German extraction. The foreign white stock seemed to be concentrated in the precinct of Thorsby which had 105 persons of foreign descent representing 55 percent of the county total.

5. Race relations were of considerable importance to the county population since 16 percent of the total 1930 population was Negro, a decline from 17 percent in 1920. As was to be expected, the precinct having the largest Negro population was Clanton with 25 percent of the total Negro population. This precinct had 26 percent of the total population. The Negroes were most thickly settled in Maplesville precinct

which had 38 percent of its population Negro as compared to 15 percent for Clanton and 16 percent for the county.

By residence 77 percent of the Negroes were rural farm dwellers and only 23 percent rural non-farm, compared to 78 and 22 percent respectively for the county population.

6. The sex distribution for the county shows a considerable lack of males compared to females when contrasted with the United States, due partly to the Negroes in the population as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. MALES PER 100 FEMALES, BY RACE AND BY RESIDENCE,
CHILTON COUNTY AND THE UNITED STATES

	Rural Farm	Rural Non-farm	Negro	White
Chilton County.....	106.8	89.7	94.9	104.4
United States.....	111.0	105.0	97.0	102.7

FACTS ABOUT CHILTON COUNTY

by

MADIE BELLE WARD

History: In a double sense Chilton, "heart of Alabama," is a reconstruction county, for it was created in the post-war days of 1868 and formed from the four counties which now surround it: Autauga, Bibb, Shelby, and Perry. The rapid progress and development of the young county may be ascribed to its formation concurrent with the coming of the railroad which, advantageously, cut through the center of the newly-formed tract. The site for Clanton, county seat and chief city of the section, was determined by the location of this same railroad line. The early importance of Chilton County was related to its predominant business, the flourishing lumber and sawmill concerns. As the plentiful stand of pine timber was cut off, agriculture succeeded industry, the old ratio was lost, and former industrial prestige has not returned.

Geography: As can be readily observed, the county as a whole has a decidedly vertical character through a combination of natural and artificial causes. It is bounded on the east by the Coosa river with its subsidiary streams and the lake waters formed in recent years by a system of dams. A national forest reserve gives Chilton its western boundary. The Louisville and Nashville Railway slices through the heart of the county and the Bee Line Highway from Birmingham to Montgomery likewise divides the section centrally from north to south. As a consequence the population has tended toward an up-and-down grouping, pushing in from east and west.

Climatic conditions in Chilton County are quite favorable as a whole. However the number of cyclone scares with their frequent dreaded toll of destruction has given many who live in this section a fear of recurring disaster. This sense of insecurity was evidenced by the widespread construction of storm cellars in the post-storm panic of several years ago.

Climate and soil have been conducive to Chilton's development. The soil throughout the county is a sandy loam with red clay, and beneath, a yellow clay sub-soil. The former, however, predominates and makes the higher land (the last easy slopes of the extreme Appalachians) ideal for diversified agriculture, the lowlands for dairy crops. The accompanying mild weather results in a long growing season and a temperature favorable even for the perennial production of certain foods.

Economic Character: These combined factors, climate, soil, transportation opportunities, and perhaps the heritage of its large proportion of Anglo-Saxon citizens, have made Chilton County what it characteristically is—a section depending largely on agriculture for its economic figures, approximately four thousand farms, comprising 57.4% of the total

land area. (This percentage would be even more pronounced if we subtracted the national forest acreage from land area statistics.) In terms of population, 78% of the inhabitants are farming people. (From a total population of 24,579, there are 19,117 in farm families.)

Statistical records of farm size in Chilton County show an increase in average acreage from 60.6 acres in 1930 to 65.7 acres in 1935. The value of these land tracts is slightly above the state average. The assessed value per acre for Chilton County farmlands is \$18.93 compared with the figure of \$18.73 for the state as a whole. The opposite is true in a consideration of the average farm which in the county is valued at \$1,244, in the state at \$1,347. The difference is explained by the size of Chilton's farms, a little smaller than the average in the state at large.

Chilton County has always been typified by its large percentage of active ownership by its white population, which composes eighty-four percent of the total population. Forty-four percent of the county's four thousand farms are operated by full or part owners and fifty-six percent by tenants.

Chilton County, unlike its neighbors, is not engaged in an all-cotton agriculture, but in the development of diversified products, among which fruits are increasingly important. The county's strawberry crop is perhaps most worthy of note, being the second largest in the state. A recent estimate reports almost a million quarts of berries in one season. Dewberries, watermelons, peaches, plums, figs, and pears are produced to a lesser extent but in commercial quantities. There is a growing spirit of cooperation in production and systematic marketing by farmers who realize a source of livelihood in truck-farming and fruit growing. Other agricultural pursuits are dairying, poultry-farming, and stock-raising, though these interests are not in the ascendancy.

Citizens with an interest in the progress of the county have given definite encouragement in recent years to the development of industrial plants for which the section holds potentialities. Lumbering continues and textile manufacturing with native white labor is a growing concern. Abundant power is furnished by two hydro-electric plants on the Coosa River—Mitchell Dam and Lock Twelve. These are centers for arteries of Alabama Power and may in the future provide extensive rural electrification as well as supply industrial power to Chilton County.

Political Character: Some knowledge of the county system as it is maintained in Alabama and the South is prerequisite to an understanding of the political organization in Chilton County. The county system distinguished from the northern township unit, was in early Southern history an adaptation to geographical conditions which prevented any more closely-knit localized government. Today the county is merely the creature of the state, its officials operating only to execute state legislation within county boundaries.

It would be well to consider the position of the two more important county officers—the sheriff and the judge of probate. The office of probate judge in Alabama is one of peculiar importance and significance, for its powers and duties extend, in one county or another, into almost every field of administration. Chilton County is one of these in which the probate judge has various functions, many of them quite unrelated to one another. It is characteristic, too, of the position that the judge, elected by the people and eminent as much for personal influences as for official position practically dominates local government. The number and type of duties assigned or permitted the probate judge is open to quite flexible interpretation in the state constitution and has developed, therefore, along somewhat different lines in the separate sections.

Some idea of the influence of the probate judge in Chilton County is gained by noting that he may function in a judicial, executive and legislative capacity. He presides over the Court of County Commissioners (the legislative group, called in some counties the Board of Revenue), acts as member and as clerk of the same body, and holds Probate Court. This court, since the abolition of the county court in Chilton in 1923, exercises jurisdiction over minor offenses, matters of record, juvenile dependents and delinquents. In addition the probate judge is the licensing and recording officer of the county and files routine certificates of incorporation, mortgages, deeds, abstracts, marriage licenses and records, game permits, and all published laws of the county. He appoints certain administrative and clerical officers. In Chilton County the judge is on a salary basis, holds office for six years and frequently succeeds himself. In the majority of sections he is paid by fees for his specific services.

The sheriff also occupies a place of importance. In Alabama and in Chilton County, in contrast to his function in many other states, the sheriff is chiefly a law-enforcement officer, executing court orders, securing evidence of and ferreting out crime. Essentially the sheriff is an officer of the state, executing state laws within his county limits. In Chilton County the sheriff is paid entirely by fee, serves for four years and is eligible to succeed himself.

Historically Chilton has been a Republican county and maintained this position until the advent of the Roosevelt administration. According to a register published in April, 1940, the county has 5200 qualified and registered voters and the party affiliation is perhaps now half and half.

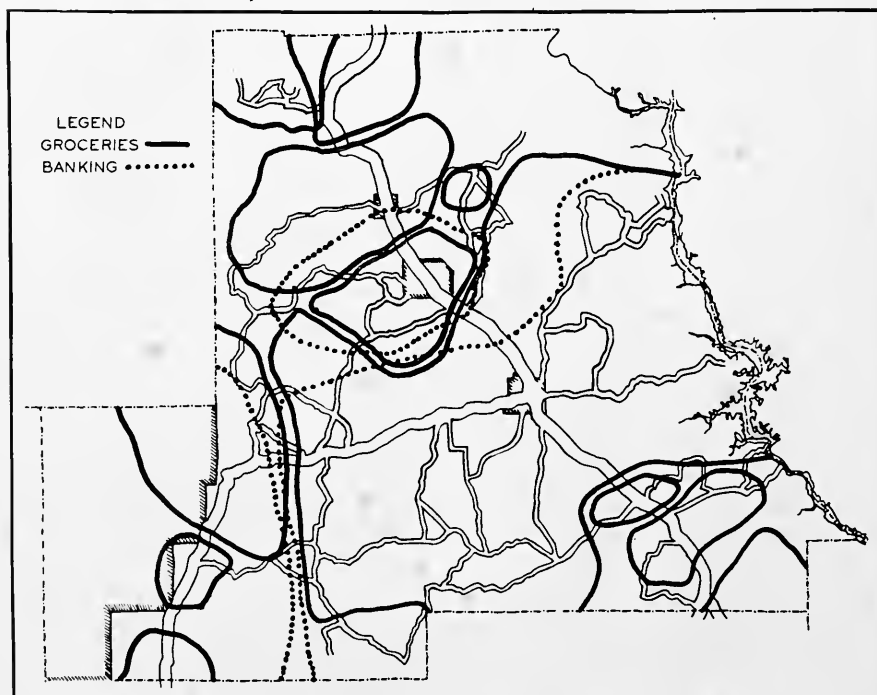
Acknowledgment for use of material in the Appendix is made to the following sources:

The Central Alabamian, 1936; *The Alabama Sportsman*;
The Chilton County News; *Clanton and Chilton County*;
Report on a Survey of the Organization and Administration of the State and County Governments of Alabama, Institute for Government Research, Vol. V, pt. 4.
Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This study grew out of a desire for more information about Alabama communities for use in the sociology classes at Alabama College. The emphasis of the study shifted to the methodology of determining community boundaries when it was felt that the accepted service-area method was not altogether suitable for the Alabama situation. This change of emphasis meant abandoning research along some of the lines originally contemplated.

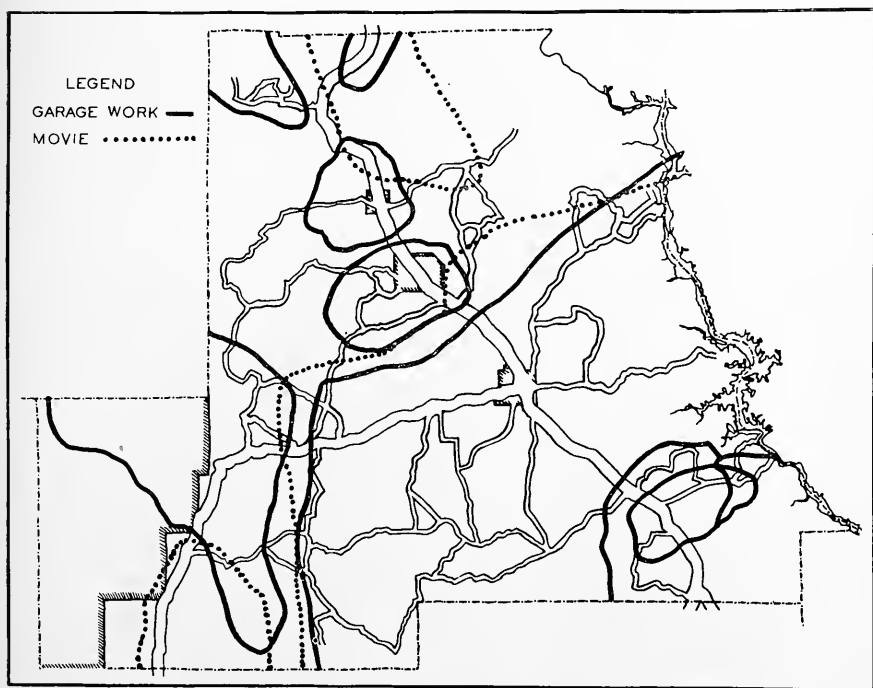
Chilton County was selected because it was almost entirely rural, conveniently accessible to the College, and had just been surveyed by the State Department of Education with the view of further school consolidation. The director of this present study had assisted in the educational survey and had thus gained a familiarity with the county. Of even more importance in the selection of the county was the fact that the home of every school child could be located on the map from information obtained in the school survey.



MAP 11.

BANKING AND GROCERY AREAS

We set out to determine the community boundaries by the service-area method which includes in a natural community all those using a common service center. We visited every school in the county to which children were transported, thereby omitting only a few one or two-room schools. At each school we asked the children above the third grade to fill out a questionnaire in which, among other things, we asked: Where does your family go most often to buy groceries, clothing, hardware; get garage work done, corn ground, cotton ginned; attend movies, Sunday School, church; consult with doctors and dentists; to do banking?



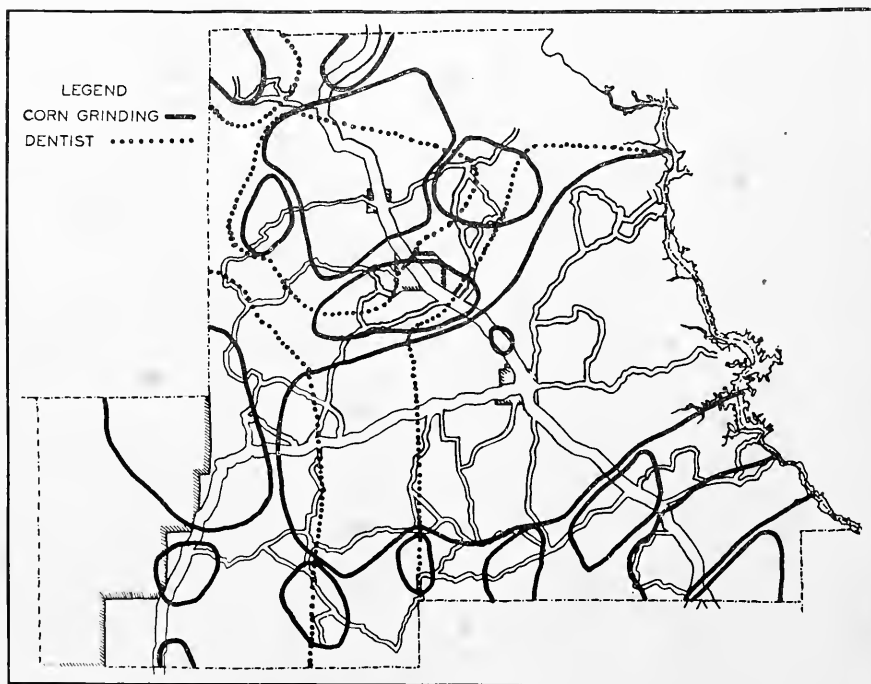
MAP 12.

GARAGE AND MOVIE AREAS

The six maps on pages 72-77 show the results obtained.

Once these questionnaires were returned to the office the procedure was as follows:

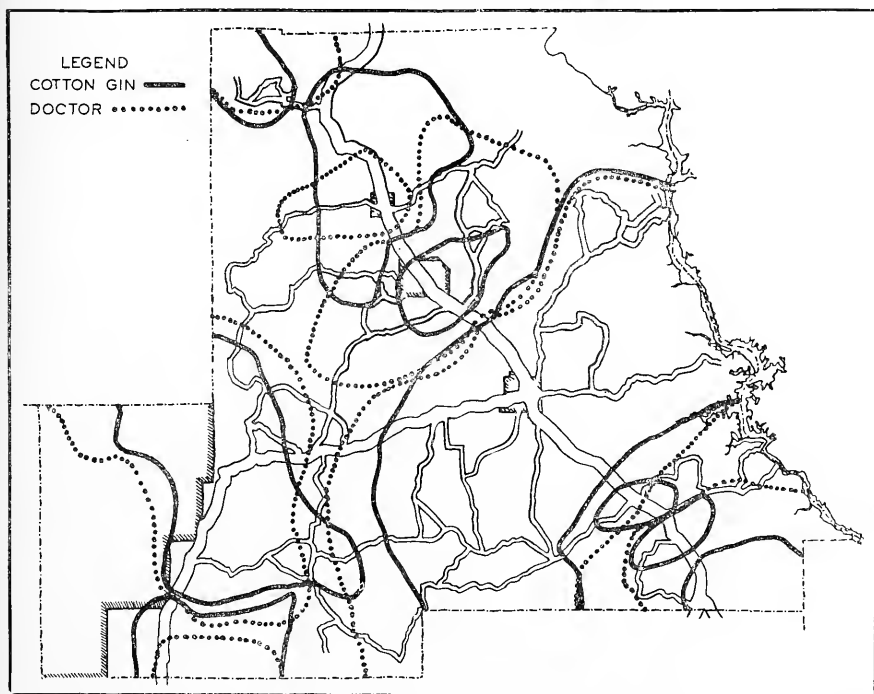
1. Clip brothers' and sisters' questionnaires together. (Many of them attended different schools.)
2. Locate the home of each child on the map and give it the same number as the questionnaire.
3. Map each service area for the service centers separately. In the case of the grocery area, for example, each center was represented by a colored pin. A pin representing the center where the family bought its groceries was placed by the home. When this had been done for the whole county, lines were drawn around the pins which were the same color, leaving for further investigation the areas where there was a mixture of color.



MAP 13.

GRIST MILL AND DENTIST

Service Areas as Obtained from Questionnaires Given
To School Children in Chilton County



MAP 14.

DOCTOR AND COTTON GIN AREAS

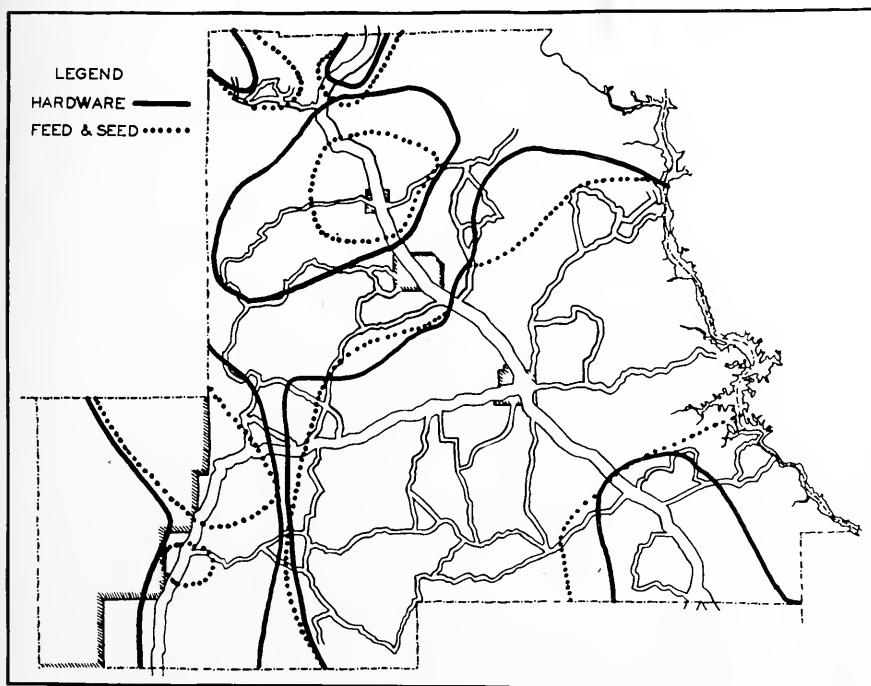
Service Areas as Obtained from Questionnaires Given
To School Children in Chilton County



MAP 15.

CHURCH AREAS

Service Areas as Obtained from Questionnaires Given
To School Children in Chilton County

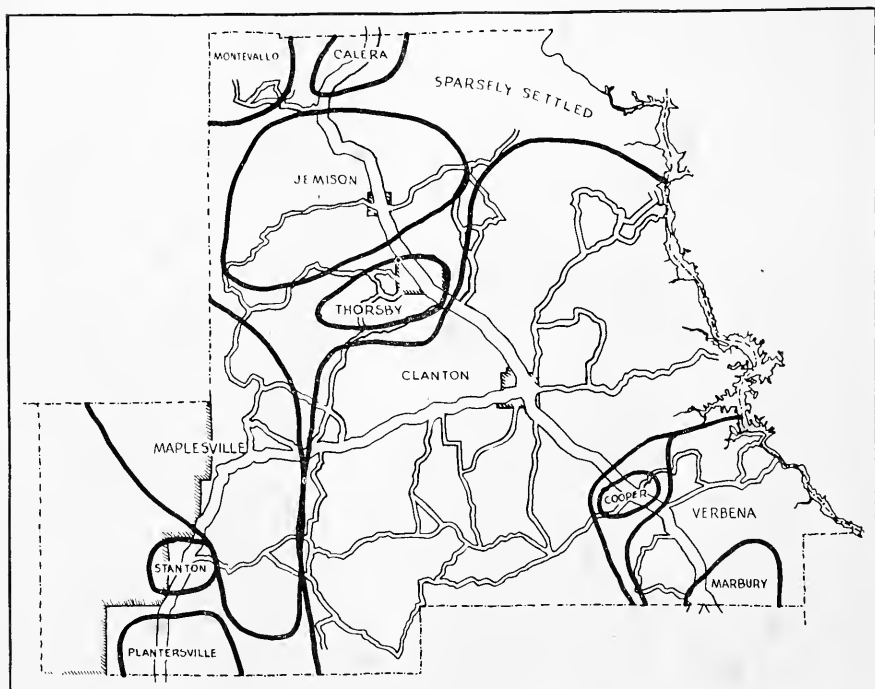


MAP 16.

HARDWARE AND FEED AND SEED AREAS

4. Impose the areas for all services on one map and then draw a composite area for each center, including all the territory which was exclusively served by that area. See map 17, just below.

5. Visit the areas claimed by two or more centers and by interviews see to which center these areas belong.



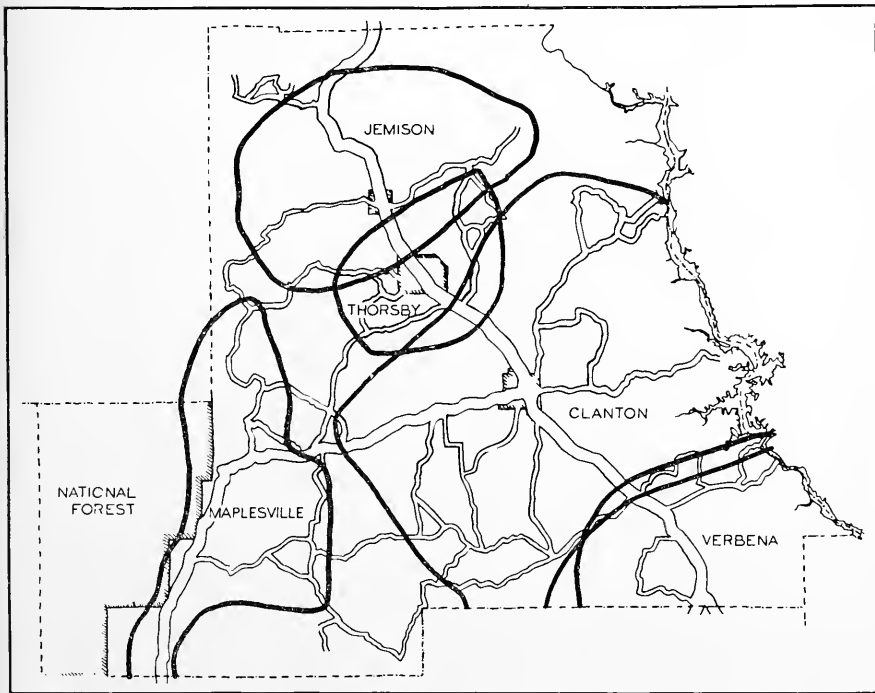
MAP 17.

COMPOSITE COMMUNITIES OBTAINED BY SERVICE AREA METHOD ON
BASIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES FILLED OUT BY SCHOOL CHILDREN.
(CHILTON COUNTY)

In checking the reliability of the school children as informants we found that siblings disagreed ten percent of the time. There was most disagreement over the place where clothing was usually purchased. Because of this we did not use the clothing service area in making the composite area. Feed and seed purchases were the next most common cause of disagreement. We also felt that the questionnaires filled in by the fourth grade children were unreliable and did not use them in tabulation and mapping. In the last half of the schools visited we gave questionnaires to the children in every other grade in order to lighten the heavy

burden of mapping. This reduced our sample to 1200 questionnaires covering twenty-five percent of the homes shown on the highway map.

We tried the popular short-cut to this method which is based on the information given by business men as to the extent of their service areas. This meant visiting the areas claimed by business men in two or more centers. The result of this method is Map 18 below where we show the overlapping areas.



MAP 18.

COMPOSITE COMMUNITY AREAS AS OBTAINED FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY BUSINESS MEN IN THE CHIEF TRADE CENTERS OF CHILTON COUNTY

Meanwhile, we were gathering data about the five largest centers of the county with the aid of interviews based on organizational and leadership schedules. This material was used in the descriptions of these centers in Part Two.

The areas obtained by the two variations of the service methods did not seem to be the real natural community in Chilton County where we found neighborhood attachments very strong. It was necessary to begin a thorough mapping of the neighborhoods of the county in order to understand their characteristics. *Accepting the underlying concept of the trade and service area method* we began to study the attachments of

whole neighborhoods to a given center rather than the attachments of individual families. Our experience has led us to believe that the "neighborhood cluster method", briefly presented in Part Three, has more advantages than disadvantages when compared with other methods, *especially in predominantly rural sections where neighborhood loyalties have been maintained.*

1. The layman can more easily understand the community obtained by clustering the neighborhoods around a center. He knows that a family is a part of a neighborhood and can see why a neighborhood should be a part of a natural community.

2. The cluster method does not split neighborhoods as the trade-service area method often does with its emphasis upon secondary rather than primary association.

3. The community obtained by the service-area method has a structure, considered geographically, divided into village and farm people; the cluster method gives a better defined structure consisting of several neighborhoods as well as the center. The latter structure is better adapted to serve as basis of representation in planning programs.

4. The cluster method is much less laborious than the trade-service area method where questionnaires are circulated, each home located and its attachments shown for the several services. As for consulting business men, unless topographical features play a considerable part in shaping the buying habits of the people, there is apt to be disagreement among merchants in rival communities. This necessitates a certain amount of field work, in some cases not much more than would be involved in mapping the neighborhoods of the county to begin with.

5. Both methods demand a measure of arbitrary judgment. The neighborhood cluster method is arbitrary in that the investigator, after a preliminary survey of the county, must determine which centers in and bordering the county seem to be possible centers of the natural communities of the county. (In Chilton County these were determined after consultation with the county superintendent of schools, an extension worker, business men and farmers.) People being interviewed in regard to the attachments of their neighborhoods must have the same choice of centers; otherwise their answers will not be comparable.

The investigator using the service-area method often has to draw an arbitrary line through areas which trade almost equally with competing centers; that is, if these are to be parts of communities rather than "no-man's-land." The service-area method is arbitrary, furthermore, in the choice of services which it considers of most importance. This is illustrated in the present study by the appearance of Stanton and Cooper on Map 17 as small communities. The reason for this is the inclusion of church, grocery, feed and seed, cotton ginning and corn grinding,—all of them small areas—as partial determinants of the community boundaries. If we had drawn up a different list of services our areas would have been different.